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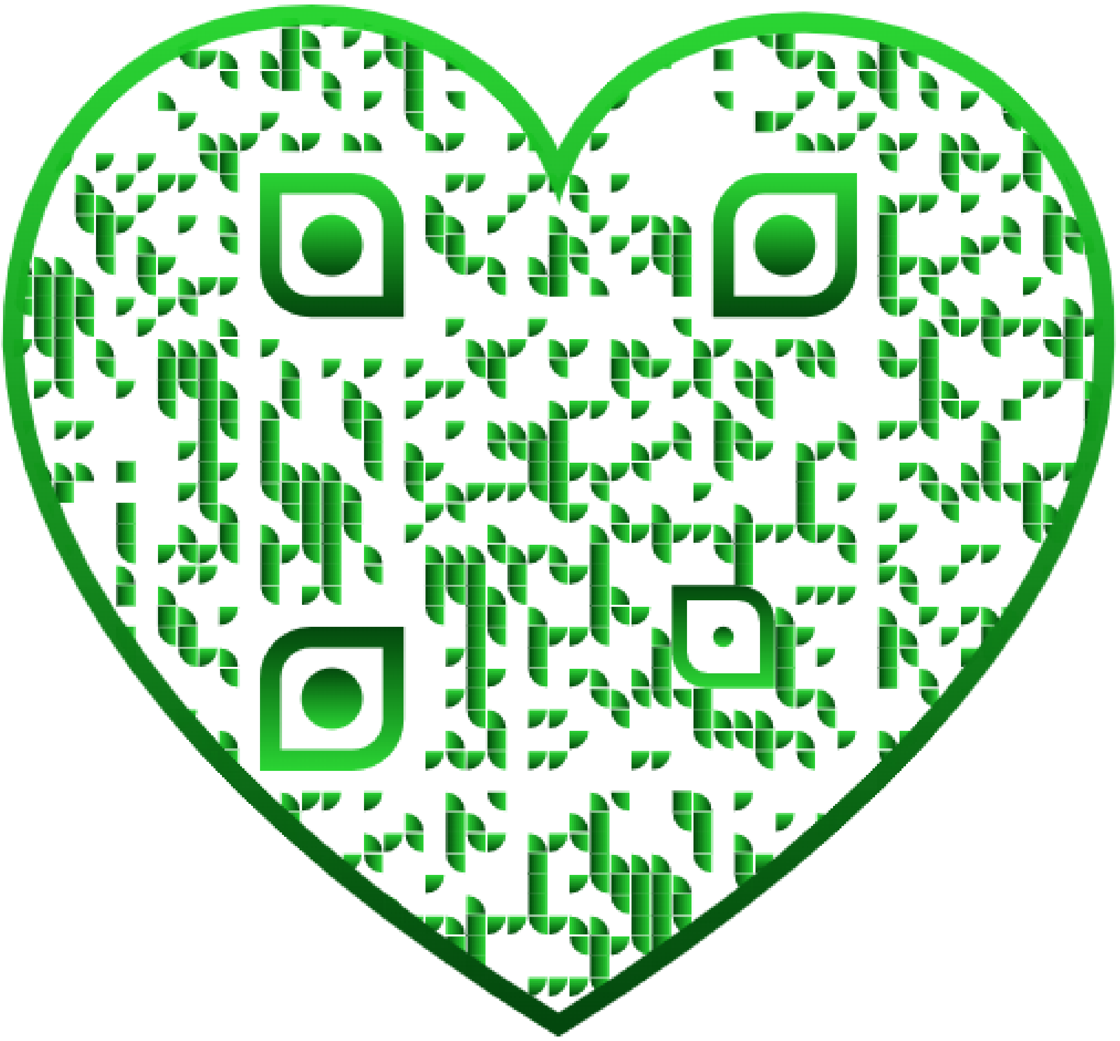
2025



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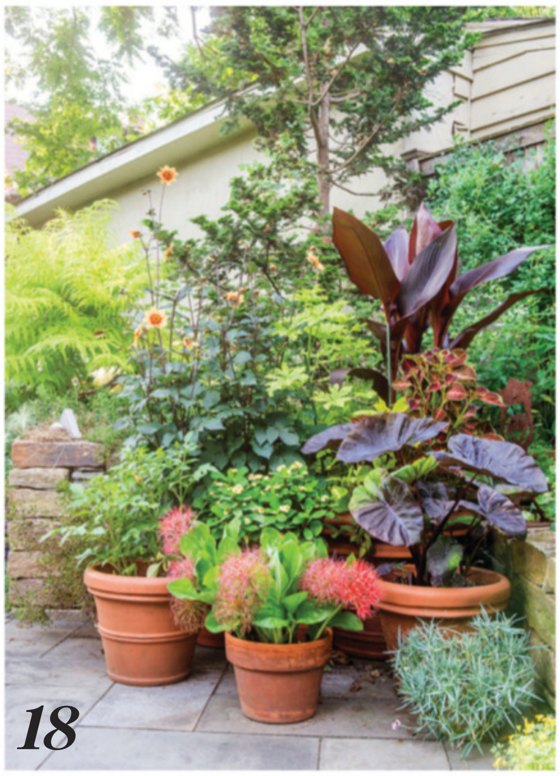
Find fresh ideas for growing your own veggies, planting for pollinators, and creating a mini oasis all in a tiny yard.



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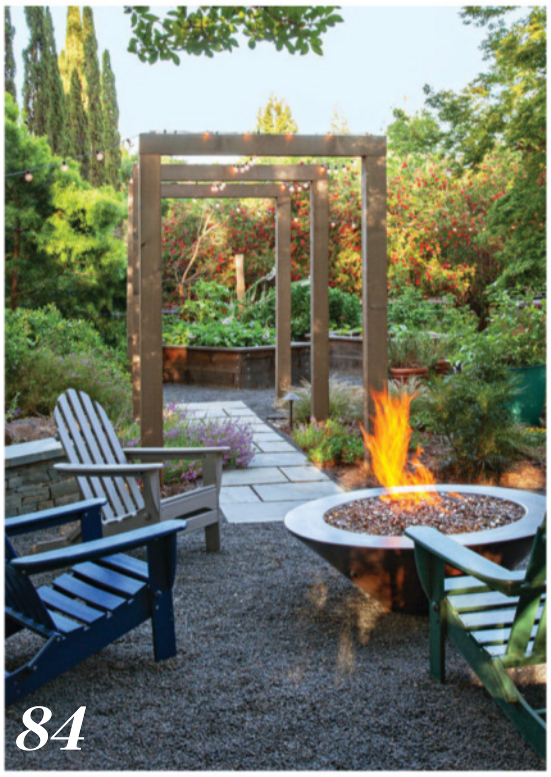
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ON THE COVER
photographer KINDRA CLINEFF

FROM THE EDITOR

For a solid three seasons out of the year, the 4x20-foot balcony off my apartment works extremely hard. The narrow space is split into three zones: an outdoor futon to lounge, a bistro table and grill to dine alfresco, and a potting bench to prep my containers. (Last summer I grew a ton of arugula, a few green beans, and exactly one—yes, one—tomato. My green thumb is still ripening.)

As we arranged this issue, the same theme seemed to bubble to the top of every story: *small* doesn't mean *limiting*. I'm beyond inspired by the 16 gardeners featured in the coming pages. A lack of square footage didn't hinder their growing plans but acted as a healthy challenge.

To make your perusing easier, we divided the issue into four sections: Container Gardens, Edible Gardens, Curb Appeal, and Backyard Retreats. Whether you have a slab of concrete, a petite yard, or a tiny terrace, we hope you will find the motivation needed to kick-start your spring and summer. I am looking forward to relaxing with a good book in the sun—right after planting some seeds (I'll skip the tomatoes this time around).

EMILY ELVERU
Editor

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KNOW YOUR SOIL

Dirt's dirt, right? Not so fast! Sure, some yards seem to strike gold. But most gardeners need to put in some work to launch their soil into top-tier status—ordinary dirt typically has either too much or too little of what plants really need. Here's how to figure it all out.

WHAT'S IN YOUR DIRT?

Every type of soil is made up of tiny bits of rock, minerals, water, air, and organic elements: Bugs. Worms. Decomposed plants and leaves. These elements store nutrients and act like veins to carry what plants need—including air and water—through the ground. Size of particles varies, too, from sand (which is really big) to silt (which is medium-size) to clay (which is very small). Too much or too little of any one of those things can thwart your soil. Here's what happens:

CLAY Too many small particles in your soil equals lots of compaction, which means water and nutrients can't move.

HOW TO FIX IT

- Add lots of compost to the top of the soil.
- Mulch, mulch, mulch.
- Consider using raised beds, which drain better.
- If your beds are not mulched, don't walk on them. You'll pack down the soil even more.

SAND Too many large particles in your soil means that all the stuff your plants need—water, air, organic matter—moves too quickly, and the plants can't grab it before it goes.

HOW TO FIX IT

- Add plenty of compost by working a couple of inches into the top of the soil.
- Mulch, mulch, mulch.

LOAM This is the ideal soil mix with a just-right combination of rich and healthy particles.

GOOD TO KNOW

- Even if your soil is an ideal loamy mix, you still should add compost every year—and mulch too.

How to Test Your Soil

Take separate samples from throughout your front yard, backyard, and flowerbeds to get a full look at your soil content.

① Fill a quart jar about a third full with soil. Then fill the rest of the jar with water. Screw on the lid.

② Give the jar a robust shake to break up the clumps.

③ Let it sit overnight.

④ Draw a line with a permanent marker on the jar where the level of the sand is. Then draw a line at the silt level, and finally clay. These lines can help you approximate what your soil consists of. Loam should be about 30–40 percent sand, 30–40 percent loam, and 20 percent clay.

11 Tips to Water the Right Way

There's no quicker way to kill your plants than by over- or underwatering. Luckily, smart watering isn't that hard. Follow these helpful tips.

1. **FOCUS ON DRAINAGE** If you don't, no other smart watering tips will work—your plants and their roots will get waterlogged. Drainage means two things: soil that drains and containers that drain.
If your container doesn't have drainage holes, drill a few before planting.
2. **DITCH THE SCHEDULE** Watering every Monday? Rethink the routine. How much you water depends on how much natural rainfall you get. Instead, feel the soil: If it's dry, it needs moisture. That goes for containers and beds too.
3. **THINK DEEP** Surface watering isn't doing your plants any good. You need to soak the soil—at least an inch or two below the surface—to get the roots super soaked. That leads to the next point...
4. **GO SLOW AND STEADY** Too much water too fast will lead to runoff. If you're setting up a sprinkler for a flowerbed, use a slow setup. If you're tending to your container, turn the hose on a leisurely trickle.
5. **STICK TO MORNINGS AND NIGHTS** If you turn on your sprinkler or hose in the middle of the day, lots of water will evaporate instead of hitting your plants. Instead, water first thing in the morning or at dusk.
6. **CONSIDER DRYING FACTORS** Sun isn't the only thing that dries out plants. Wind does too. Monitor both, and check plants daily for signs of wilting.
7. **AVOID SITTING WATER** That goes for both containers and flowerbeds. It'll lead to rot.
8. **ADD COMPOST AND MULCH** Both elements boost your soil's ability to hold water.
9. **PERSONALIZE IT** Plants are different—and have different water needs. Work with them.
10. **KNOW YOUR CONTAINER** Different pots hold water differently, so adjust accordingly. Dark-color planters get hotter; terra-cotta dries out quickly. Make sure all containers have a bottom drainage hole.
11. **GIVE AN INCH** Your plants and lawn need about an inch of water each week. Factor any naturally occurring moisture into that total. If you're in a heavy rain season, wait until your plants need it before turning on the hose.

SIGNS OF UNDERWATERING

DRIED, YELLOWED LEAVES AT THE PLANT'S BOTTOM

ROOTS APPEARING AT THE SURFACE

SIGNS OF OVERWATERING

WILTED, YELLOWED, OR BROWNING LEAVES

WET SOIL

CONSIDER INSTALLING DRIP IRRIGATION ON RAISED BEDS AND IN LANDSCAPING TO SAVE WATER, TIME, AND MONEY ON BILLS.

FIND A FERTILIZER
FOR YOUR YARD

While soil and air provide some nutrients, keeping the same plant in the same spot year after year leaches nutrients from the soil. Erosion also depletes essential plant food—unless you replenish it. That's where fertilizer comes in. But it's a balancing act: Too much is bad, too little is bad. A soil test (see *page 4*) and knowing what to buy can help you figure out a more precise way to improve your plant's growing space.

WHAT TO BUY Many premade fertilizers have a standard mix of three minerals: nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium. Look for N-P-K on the container—you'll see them listed as proportions. General-purpose fertilizers are 20-20-20. You also can purchase fertilizers that are mixed with N-P-K in greater or lesser quantities, as well as mixes suited for specific plants—roses or hollies, for example.

WATER-SOLUBLE It's faster-acting and must be applied more frequently, like every couple of weeks.

GRANULAR This releases nutrients slowly, lasts longer, and is needed only about two or three times a year.

3 Methods for Applying Fertilizer

BROADCAST
This includes push-behind and handheld spreaders, which help disperse fertilizer evenly across a flowerbed or lawn.

TOP-DRESS
A little bit less exact, this means to spread fertilizer by hand, *right*. It can be more difficult but allows you to better control the amount of fertilizer and get it close to your plants.

FOLIAR
These fertilizers are sprayed on with an attachment that hooks to your garden hose. They're great for quick action.

GO ORGANIC

Most fertilizers are inorganic, meaning they're made of chemicals (think granules, powders, and concentrated liquids). If you want to go organic, consider one of these options:

COMPOST (HOMEMADE OR STORE-BOUGHT) AND COMPOST TEA
MANURE
FISH EMULSION
COTTONSEED MEAL
BLOOD MEAL
BONEMEAL
LIQUID SEAWEED

FOLLOW FERTILIZER LABELS EXACTLY. APPLY TOO MUCH AND THE RUNOFF WILL END UP IN YOUR GROUNDWATER.

Brew a Bucket of Compost Tea

It's easy and great as a fertilizer.

1. **GRAB A BUCKET** Any size will do. Fill the bucket about ⅓ full of compost.
2. **ADD WATER** Fill to the top.
3. **LET THE MIX SIT** It should rest for a couple of days.
4. **STIR, THEN STRAIN** Pour into another bucket using a filter (burlap is great for this). Spread the leftover solids in the garden.
5. **ADD WATER** Dilute the liquid mix until it looks like weak tea.
6. **USE THE TEA** Spread on plants including containers, trees, flowerbeds, and pots, *above*.

FERTILIZING FACTS

WHAT TO DO

- Fertilize in the spring when plants are getting ready to grow. Try to do this before it's super rainy.
- Apply according to the directions for the fertilizer of your choice.
- Water after fertilizing so the granules won't burn the plants.
- Fertilize again in the fall for trees and shrubs.

WHAT NOT TO DO

- Apply fertilizer on a windy or rainy day.
- Let granular fertilizer get on leaves; it'll burn them.
- Apply granules when it's super dry.
- Fertilize brand-new seedlings. They don't need it.

6 SPACE-SAVING WAYS TO STORE TOOLS

1. **PEGBOARD** Install a small square to hang handheld tools.
2. **OFFICE SUPPLIES** Use file organizers, binder clips, or pushpins for seed packets.
3. **KITCHEN CART** Refashion one using hooks and a no-stain countertop.
4. **BACK OF A DOOR** Buy a premade organizer to store small tools.
5. **VINTAGE SHELF** Store seeds, hand tools, and other supplies.
6. **SMALL PAILS** Nail empty cans to a narrow stretch of wall, *left*.

HOW TO MAKE A TOOL-CLEANING STATION

Help your hand tools last longer by wiping them off after each use, then hang or stash away.

MATERIALS

- Metal bucket
- Sand
- Vegetable or motor oil

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Fill a bucket with dry sand. Moisten sand by adding a bottle of vegetable or motor oil (a).
2. Mix well.
3. Insert tools into sand (b) and let stand. Store in a cool, dry place.
4. Rub wood handles with linseed oil.
5. When gardening season ramps up, wipe the blades using an old cloth.

VEGETABLES AND FRUITS

7 STEPS FOR A BOUNTIFUL VEGGIE GARDEN

1. **GIVE YOUR SOIL SOME LOVE** That means loads of compost and mulch after you've planted. Veggies need all those nutrients.
2. **PICK A SPOT THAT DRAINS WELL** Containers are a perfect veggie garden match, as are raised beds.
3. **STAGGER PLANTS** If you have a veggie garden, rotate where you plant your favorites every season. Cucumbers, for example, should never go in the same spot. This tricks bugs and reduces risk of soil-borne disease.
4. **AIR MATTERS** Veggies like to breathe, so think ahead before you arrange them—put lettuce right next to carrots, for example, so one is done way before the other reaches maturity.
5. **SUN IS BEST** Pick the sunniest spot in your yard. Most veggies can hack it with a full day of rays (just supplement water if you need to).
6. **THINK ABOUT WATER SUPPLY** Choose a spot that's close to a spigot, or run a drip irrigation hose to your veggies. They'll need about an inch a week, including rainfall.
7. **GET RID OF PESTS** Rabbits can decimate a whole garden overnight. Fungal diseases can kill plants in a few days. Prevention and good gardening habits—a fence, disease-resistant varieties, watering in the morning, watching for sick plants and tossing them—can help.

GROW SMALL

Want to grow fruit but lacking in space? Use compact, columnar, or dwarf varieties, *above* ('Kidd's Orange Red'). Compact varieties have restrained size but high yields. Dwarf varieties are simply ordinary fruit trees that have been grafted onto dwarf branches—they grow the same size fruit, but they're a smaller plant overall. Columnar varieties are another riff on that: Those plants grow up, not out. Plus, these plants can really get their grow on in containers. You need a container that's still decent-size—30 to 36 inches across—filled with potting soil and a healthy dose of compost. Drop it in a spot that gets a lot of sun—a south exposure is best. Check your climate and hardiness Zone. If it's too cold to overwinter outside, bring your fruit indoors when temperatures start to drop.

10 Vegetables Anyone Can Grow

LEAFY GREENS

These quick-growing plants (ordinary garden lettuce, mesclun, spinach, arugula) can grow from a sprinkling of seeds. Plus, you can get multiple crops from one planting. Plant greens in the spring and again once the summer heat fades a bit.

CARROTS

Patience is key. Carrots can take close to 80 days to harvest. Sun is best, but a little shade isn't so bad either. If you forget about your carrots in the fall, they can overwinter in the ground.

ZUCCHINI

This is a plant-it-and-forget-it crop. You can plant it from seed, use the blossoms as food, and have a tremendous harvest to share and freeze. One plant will do it—we promise—especially in a tight growing space.

TOMATOES

These plants love warmth (check the seed label for when to plant), sun (at least 8 hours per day), and water (give them an inch a week—that includes rainfall). Keep them upright with a stake, trellis, or cage.

PEPPERS

Give yourself a head start by growing these from transplants. A cage around the plant can give good support as it grows up.

RADISHES

This early-season crop, which you can grow from seed, goes great when planted alongside lettuce. They can tolerate some shade but not dry spells. Sow them again and again for radishes all season long.

CUCUMBERS

Many varieties need to spread out—unless you give them a trellis and a container. If your yard is limited, choose a bush varietal. If you're on a balcony, pick vining types. Give them sun, warm temps, and water.

GREEN BEANS

Bush types are an awesome match for small-space yards. Sun is best, and raised beds or containers (just insert a trellis for them to climb) make growing in any yard a snap.

BEETS

These grow easily from seed.

PEAS

This plant doesn't like heat, so they'll finish up before summer hits its stride. Plant next to a fence or trellis.

COOL SEASON VS. WARM SEASON

You'll see some vegetables referred to as cool season; that means the plant can't tolerate extreme heat and will die off before summer reaches its peak. For example, when temperatures start to rise in early summer, lettuce will send out bolts—shoots that look scraggly and worn out—because lettuce is a cool-season veggie and can't grow properly in the heat.

7 ESSENTIALS FOR A POLLINATOR-FRIENDLY GARDEN

Make your balcony or yard a better place for birds and butterflies by including:

1. **PLACES TO HIDE** Birdhouses are great but so are trees and shrubs. Bonus: Trees and shrubs also shelter insects, which make great food for birds.
2. **FOOD** It's better for birds and butterflies if you plant a variety of blooms, berries, and seeds, and a range of plant types—annuals, perennials, vines, and grasses.
3. **SUPPLEMENTAL FOOD** Bird feeders filled with different food such as black-oil sunflower, millet, and safflower encourage a variety of birds to visit. If you start to fill feeders, don't stop—they will come to depend on it. You also can try specialized options, such as hummingbird feeders.
4. **SUN** In general, butterflies will feed only when in the sun.
5. **RESTING SPOTS** Flat stones and perches in trees give both birds and butterflies spots to snooze out of the reach of potential predators.
6. **WATER** Splash pools—even just a slim pan with an inch of water and a little sand—can provide spots for wildlife to bathe or get nutrients. Bonus points for a fountain that makes some noise—a great attraction for birds and butterflies.
7. **NESTING SPOTS** Trees, shrubs, nesting boxes, and other sheltered areas offer extra protection for birds.

Critter-Proof Your Garden

Nothing is more frustrating than realizing rabbits or deer enjoyed the fruits of your labor before you. Keep them away with these prevention measures.

CLEAN UP Rabbits like a garden that provides a ready source of vegetables and safe shelter. Rake up windfallen fruit and cover vulnerable veggies with row covers. Remove shelter spots by cleaning up brush and log piles, pruning overgrown shrubs and trees, blocking crawl spaces beneath porches and outbuildings (make sure the critters are out first), and trimming long grass (avoid mowing grassy areas if you suspect rabbits are actively nesting in them).

INSTALL FENCING To keep rabbits out, install chicken wire or hardware cloth fencing around the perimeter of your garden; bury the bottom 6 inches of fencing in the soil and have at least 3 feet of fencing above the soil line. Then angle the top 6 to 12 inches away from your garden to make it harder for rabbits to jump over. For deer, enclose the garden with a fence that's at least 8 feet high.

ENLIST SMALLER BARRIERS Rabbits mainly target new plants, *above right*, so protect bulbs and seedlings with domed chicken wire, cloches, or plant cages, *below right*. In a pinch, gallon-size or larger nursery pots with the bottoms cut out work too.

CHOOSE REPELLENT PLANTS Some scented plants can deter critters. Grow rosemary, thyme, chives, onions, garlic, or oregano around the perimeter of a garden or next to vulnerable crops like brassicas and strawberries and flowers such as petunias, tulips, and sunflowers.

SOW CLOVER Distraction is sometimes the best option. Nothing distracts rabbits quite like clover. Overseed parts of your lawn with clover seeds in spring to provide rabbits with another food source.

APPLY DETERRENTS Blood meal, dog fur, garlic oil, human hair, cayenne powder, predator urine, and putrescent egg solids are commonly used options. Reapply regularly and after heavy rain.

USE SCARE TACTICS Deer are easily spooked, so place pinwheels or reflective surfaces (aluminum pie pans, streamers) around your garden. A motion-activated sprinkler and some plastic snake or owl decoys work too. To boost your chances of success, move these items around your garden occasionally.

PHOTOGRAPHER: (TOP) DWALKER44/GETTY IMAGES

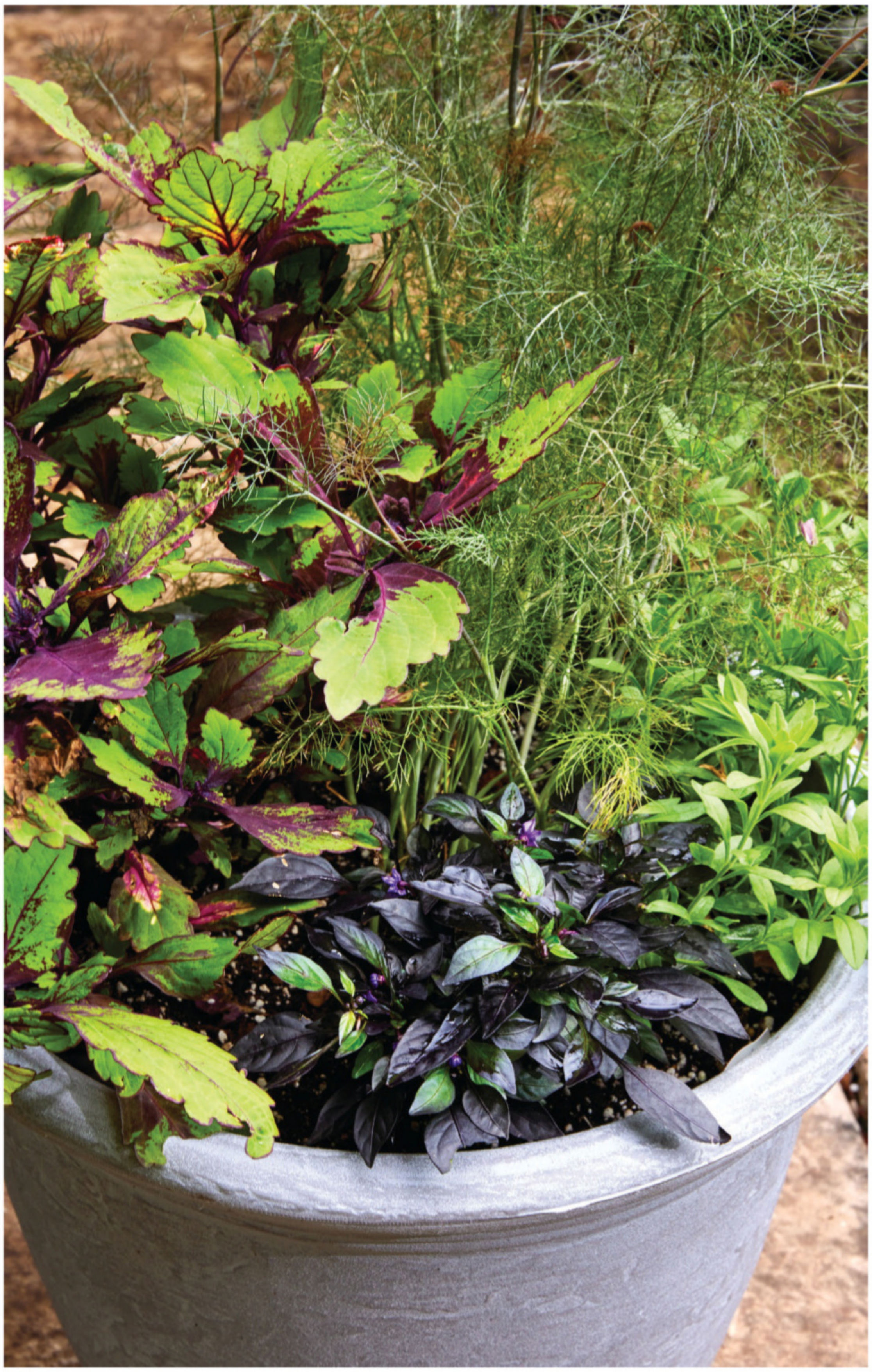
5 CONTAINER-LOVING ANNUALS

It's almost impossible to kill these plants.

WAVE PETUNIAS
VERBENA
SWEET POTATO VINE
COLEUS
SCAEVOLA

PLANT A
LUSH CONTAINER

With a little bit of effort, a container with the right mix of thriving flowers and foliage will provide a vibrant pop of color you can enjoy all season long from your patio, porch, or balcony. Follow these five steps.



PHOTOGRAPHER: GRANT WEBSTER

1 **SELECT A WINNING COMBO** When choosing plants for a container, ensure they need the same light levels and frequency of watering. Then pick one of each in these categories:

THRILLER: These plants add height and a bold vertical element. Some options include big foliage, ornamental grasses, or upright flowering plants. Plant this in the center of your container.

FILLER: More rounded in shape, these plants make a container look full. Place them in front of or around the thriller.

SPILLER: These plants hang over the edge of a pot. If your container garden is seen from all sides, place spillers all around the perimeter.

2 **LIMIT THE NUMBER OF PLANTS** They don't like crowds, so give them room to grow. Follow these plant-to-pot size ratios:

10" to 12" pot can hold 3 or 4 plants

14" to 16" pot can hold 5 to 7 plants

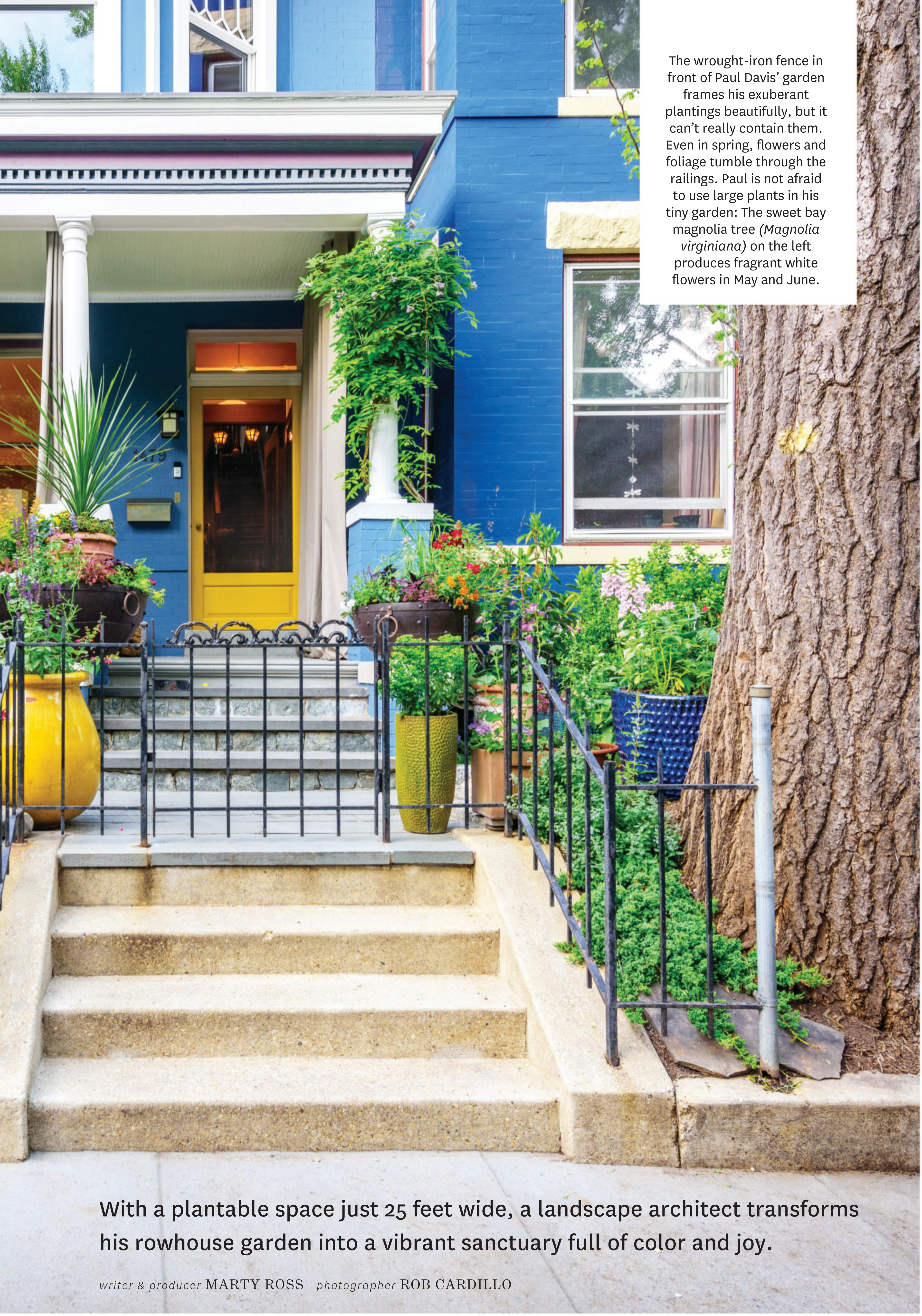
16" to 20" pot can hold 6 to 9 plants

3 **FILL A CONTAINER TWO-THIRDS FULL WITH POTTING MIX** Don't use garden soil—it's too heavy and won't drain well, potentially causing root rot.

4 **PLANT** Place each plant on the potting mix in the container, then fill in around them with more potting mix.

5 **WATER** This helps the soil settle in; add more soil if needed. After the first watering, check back in a day or two to see if the first inch or so of soil is dry to the touch. If it's dry, water again. For a healthy pot all season long, water in the morning or night and make sure your pots never get completely dry—it stresses the plants.

WHERE FLOWERS OVERFLOW



The wrought-iron fence in front of Paul Davis' garden frames his exuberant plantings beautifully, but it can't really contain them. Even in spring, flowers and foliage tumble through the railings. Paul is not afraid to use large plants in his tiny garden: The sweet bay magnolia tree *(Magnolia virginiana)* on the left produces fragrant white flowers in May and June.

With a plantable space just 25 feet wide, a landscape architect transforms his rowhouse garden into a vibrant sanctuary full of color and joy.

writer & producer MARTY ROSS *photographer* ROB CARDILLO

GARDEN AT A GLANCE

25-FOOT-WIDE FRONT YARD

WASHINGTON, D.C.

ZONE 7A

THE DESIGN
For Paul Davis, a tiny garden means infinite possibilities. His postage-stamp yard in front of his Columbia Heights-neighborhood rowhouse is packed full of flowerpots bursting with color, annual and perennial flowerbeds, a heritage rosebush, and even a small water garden in a pot. “You know, it’s not really designed; it just happens,” he says, but the principles of garden design are second nature to Paul, a landscape architect. Big flowerpots at the edge of the garden’s stone terrace, up four steps from the sidewalk, give Paul even more room to plant.

THE PLANTS
To make the most of his small space, Paul densely and intricately layers the garden with flowers and foliage, which allows him to grow as many plants as possible. “I put in all these little plugs” of plants every spring, he says. “I stuff them everywhere, and it’s crazy with butterflies and bees and birds in the summer.” By the end of the season, the garden is so full that “you have to scooch around to get through it,” Paul says.

1 Wisteria twines around a porch column, but Paul prunes it to keep the branches within bounds. ***2*** Spikes of intensely fragrant lavender draw butterflies—and admiring passersby. The blooms add to the mix of vivid colors that keeps the eye moving throughout the small garden, creating the illusion of more space. ***3*** Large bowls on either side of the steps include combinations of annual and perennial flowers. But the two plantings are different on purpose; Paul sees no reason for them to match. He—along with bulldogs Hank and Pablo—putters in the garden every day, deadheading flowers, pruning here and there, and watering the plants in pots. It’s not really work, he says: “Gardens relieve stress and make life better.” ***4*** The garden just outside the porch creates a living screen, but outdoor curtains can also be drawn for privacy or to shelter the south-facing porch from the sun. A large clipped English boxwood and a boisterous mix of annual and perennial flowers fill pots on the terrace. The color combos change every year with what Paul finds at nurseries and plant sales.

4

GET LOST

Screened views, playful paths, and diverse plants make this compact garden feel larger than its actual footprint.

writer ADAM LEVINE *photographer* ROB CARDILLO *producer* TOM BORKOWSKI

OPPOSITE The entire garden in Tom Borkowski and Adam Levine's backyard is visible year-round from the many paths they laid, so plants have to earn their keep even after they finish blooming. On the north side of their house, variegated *Aucuba japonica* looms over shade-loving begonias, caladiums, purple oxalis, and achimenes. The couple constantly tweak the plantings throughout their garden, removing those that get too big and refining areas that become overgrown to make them simpler and more elegant. **THIS PHOTO** A flowering maple *(Abutilon)* adds a bright pop of orange to the green scene.

GARDEN AT A GLANCE

60×100-FOOT YARD

MEDIA, PENNSYLVANIA

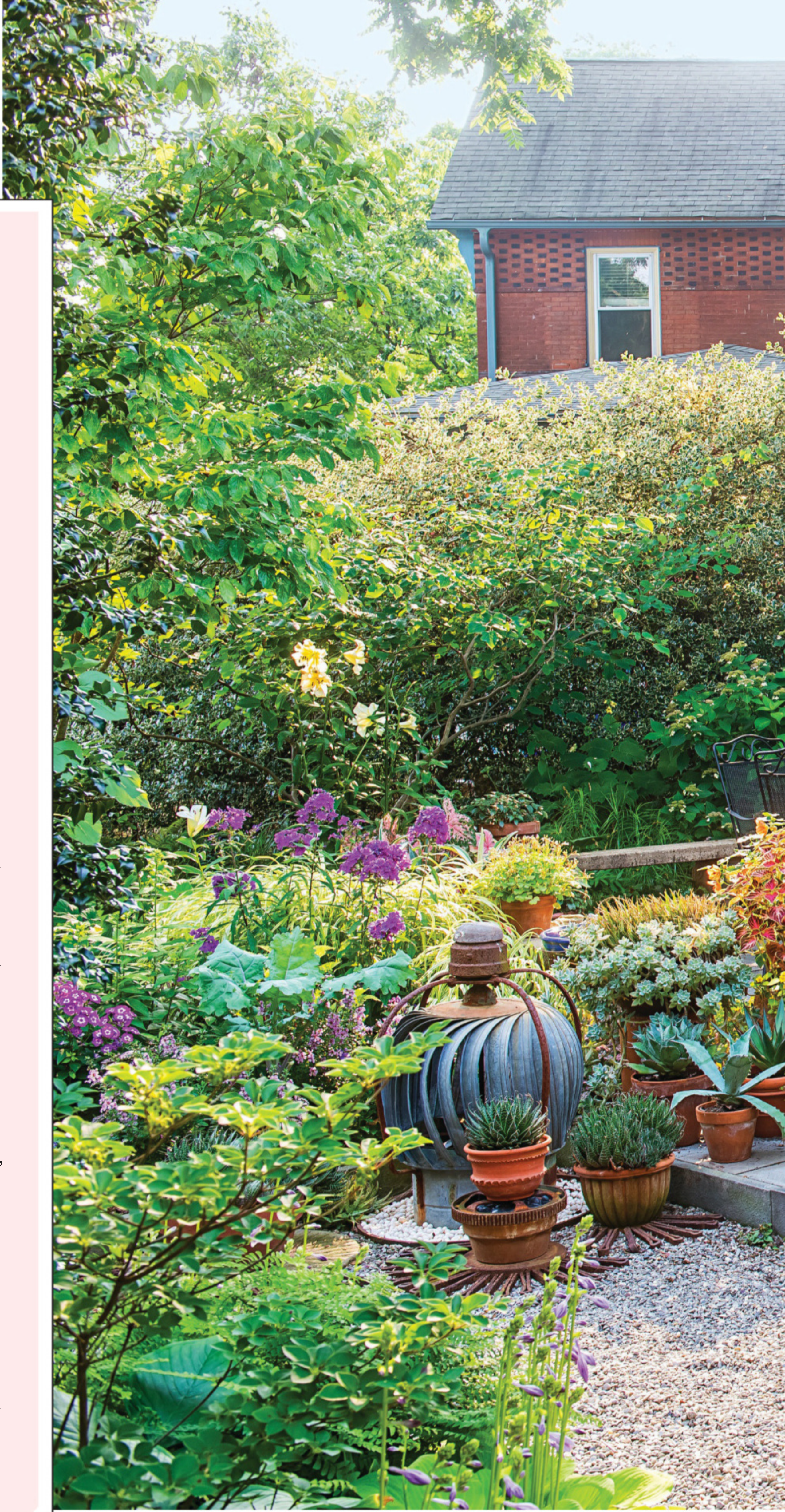
ZONE 7B

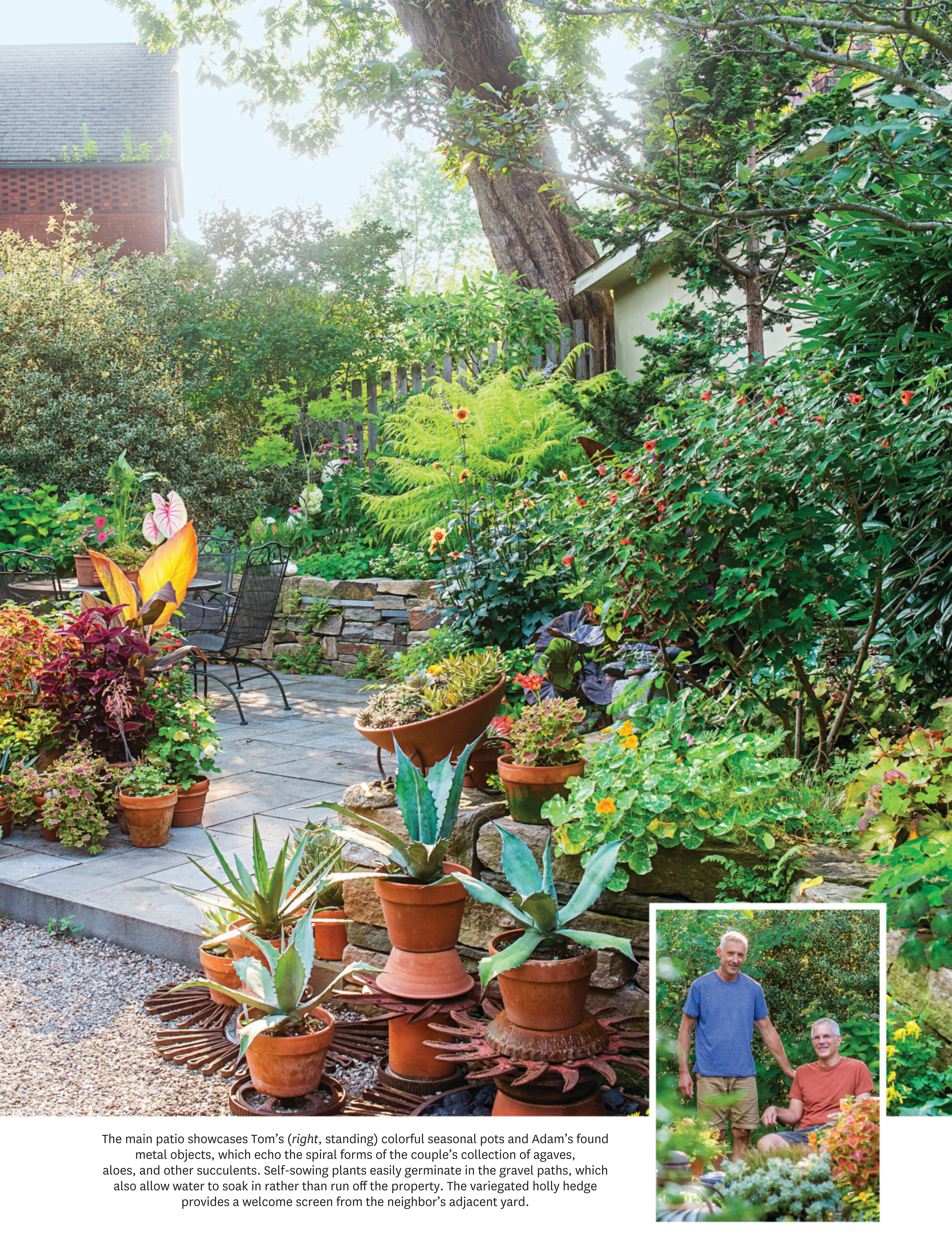
THE DESIGN

After moving from a 25-acre estate, homeowners Tom Borkowski and Adam Levine had to get comfortable with their tiny new yard—and make room for the many plants they brought with them. First, they removed a privet hedge, a dying Japanese maple, and other shrubs and dug out sections of lawn and a concrete walkway to create beds for the transported plants. Paths now snake on all four sides of the house, a stone retaining wall terraces the highest part of the sloping property, and a smaller walled bed rests in front of the sunporch (the spot where their collection of tender plants spends the winter). A large bluestone patio and several smaller paved areas house a variety of container plants in warm weather. Carefully placed fences, trees, and shrubs screen views of neighboring properties and a school, making the space seem much larger and more secluded than it is.

THE PLANTS

Tom and Adam chose shrubs and trees with small stature and used hostas, ferns, and grasses to fill other areas. Tender perennials such as cannas, dahlias, and elephant ears, and even some edible plants with ornamental foliage, grow in beds alongside long-blooming annuals, giving color all season. The mix of plants changes every year, depending on what the couple manages to save over the winter, the varieties Tom finds in local nurseries, and the color scheme he has in mind. “Design is important,” Tom says, “but a garden also should be a place to experiment and learn things. Sometimes what I try works and sometimes it doesn’t, but I always enjoy the process.”





The main patio showcases Tom's (*right*, standing) colorful seasonal pots and Adam's found metal objects, which echo the spiral forms of the couple's collection of agaves, aloes, and other succulents. Self-sowing plants easily germinate in the gravel paths, which also allow water to soak in rather than run off the property. The variegated holly hedge provides a welcome screen from the neighbor's adjacent yard.

1

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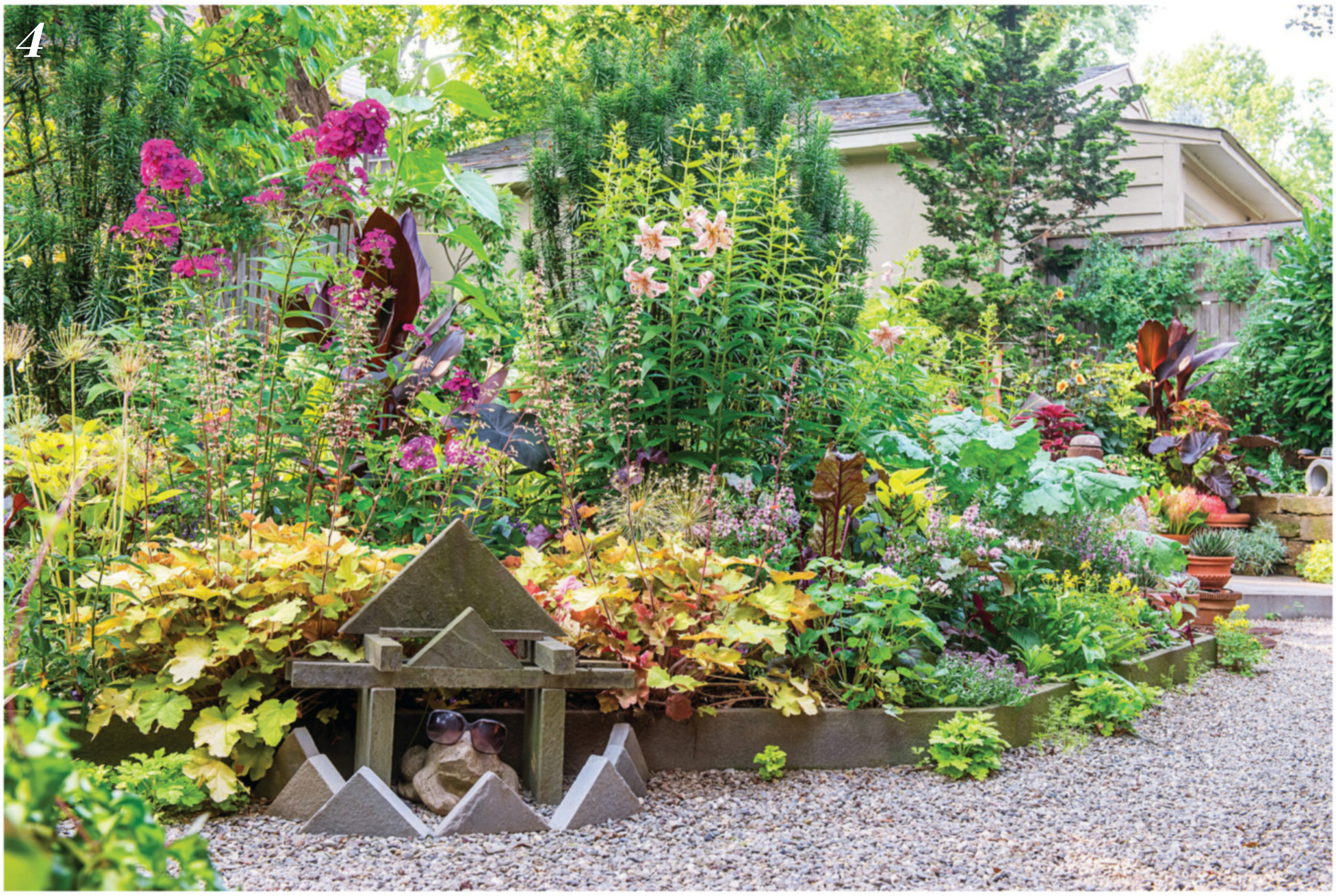
1 A specimen of *Aloe aristata* sits atop various circular objects, including the metal wheel of an old lawn mower. *2* Tom, who has spent more than 30 years designing and building gardens in the Philadelphia area, piloted the full garden renovation. After drawing up a plan, he made his way around the house, creating order where only lawn and some raggedy beds had existed before. The view from a dining room window ends with a pair of repurposed fire-escape railings salvaged from a demolished house nearby. *3* Annuals and succulents provide requisite color from spring to frost. *4* This central bed changes yearly with different plants, designs, and color schemes. Even the inanimate objects change with items drawn from a large collection housed in the garage. The couple rescued the "faceless frog" sculpture from a friend's junk pile, then made the amphibian a house from bluestone scraps left over from their patio construction. "Strong geometry is a way to keep order in the playground that our garden is," Tom says. "We're constantly bringing in odd plants and objects, and without the underlying sense of order it would become a big jumble." *5* An arrangement of potted plants on the patio includes dahlia, *Pelargonium*, *Canna* 'Australia', coleus, *Colocasia*, *Scadoxus multiflorus*, *Euphorbia milii*, and dianthus. As in many other gardens and landscapes that Tom has designed and built, this hardscape delineates different beds and pots with varying levels of sunlight and moisture needs to grow a wide variety of plants.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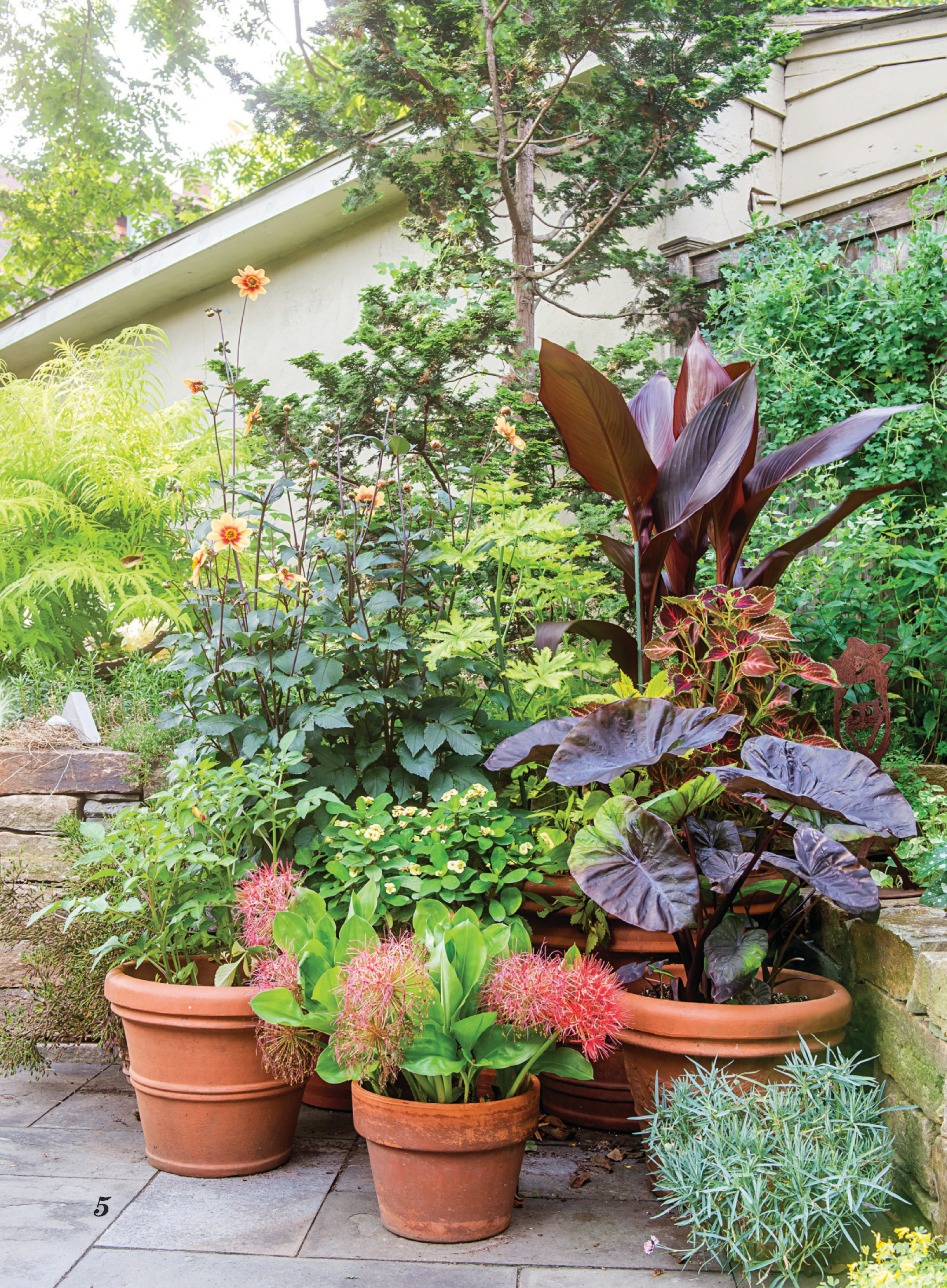

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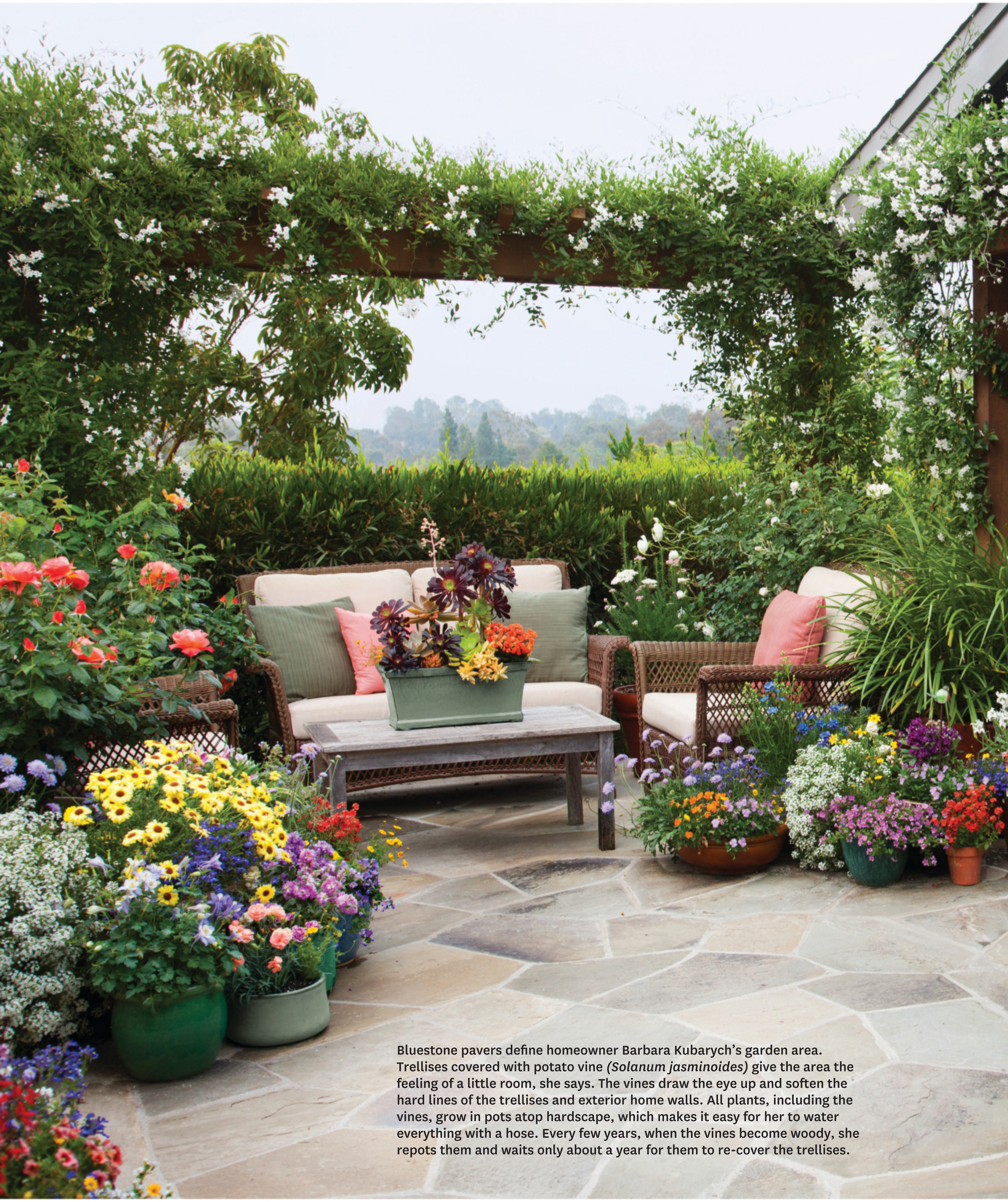


Bluestone pavers define homeowner Barbara Kubarych's garden area. Trellises covered with potato vine *(Solanum jasminoides)* give the area the feeling of a little room, she says. The vines draw the eye up and soften the hard lines of the trellises and exterior home walls. All plants, including the vines, grow in pots atop hardscape, which makes it easy for her to water everything with a hose. Every few years, when the vines become woody, she repots them and waits only about a year for them to re-cover the trellises.

Work *in* Bloom

A sun-drenched garden with fragrant flowers and vibrant vines tucks between a stand-alone office and main house to provide a break for relaxation and serenity.

writer & producer
DEBRA LEE BALDWIN
photographer ED GOHLICH

DESIGN ESSENTIALS FOR OUTDOOR ROOMS

An intimate outdoor living area adjacent to your home makes nearby indoor spaces seem larger. Whether you wish to use the space as a pass-through, breakfast nook, or meditation retreat, keep these elements in mind as you plan.

HARDSCAPE Brick, flagstone, and stabilized decomposed granite are classic groundcover options in a patio space. Enhance a concrete slab with tile or paint it to resemble a rug.

WALLS Create the illusion of a room—or cover existing exterior walls—with vining plants. Add sconces, include a pot-hanging pole, hang weatherproof art, or plant a hedge. The aim: Construct a haven or enclosure using creative resources.

SHADE Use lattice, sun shades, or trellises to get relief from the sun, or position the area beneath the leafy branches of a tree.

FURNISHINGS Pieces should check three boxes: comfy, weather-resistant, and in scale and proportion to your space. Consider a coffee table and love seat, a bistro table with two chairs, or a dining table with seating for four or six.

SURFACES Glass-top tables make a space feel airy but can scratch and show water spots. Wicker (and woven plastic that resembles wicker) allows water to drain. Metal pieces are weather-resistant, though heavy to move. Teak looks elegant but requires annual upkeep.

FABRIC Look for material that's resistant to dirt and moisture and won't fade or deteriorate in the sun.

ACCESSORIES To make a stark sitting area feel sumptuous, add all-weather throw pillows.

PLANTS Pots with flowers, shrubs, bonsai, or succulents add fragrance and/or color to a small, entirely hardscaped area.

GARDEN AT A GLANCE

350 SQUARE FEET

DEL MAR, CALIFORNIA

ZONES 10A/10B/11A

THE DESIGN

For the decades that Barbara Kubarych has worked from home, her daily commute has involved only a stroll through her sunny, fragrant flower garden. Barbara and her husband, Ken, poured a concrete slab and built a simple 280-square-foot office building adjacent to their ranch-style home. It has “no plumbing—just walls, windows, and electrical outlets,” Ken says. Outside the French doors, an inviting sitting area with dozens of potted annuals and perennials gives Barbara a space to take calls or a break between meetings.

THE PLANTS

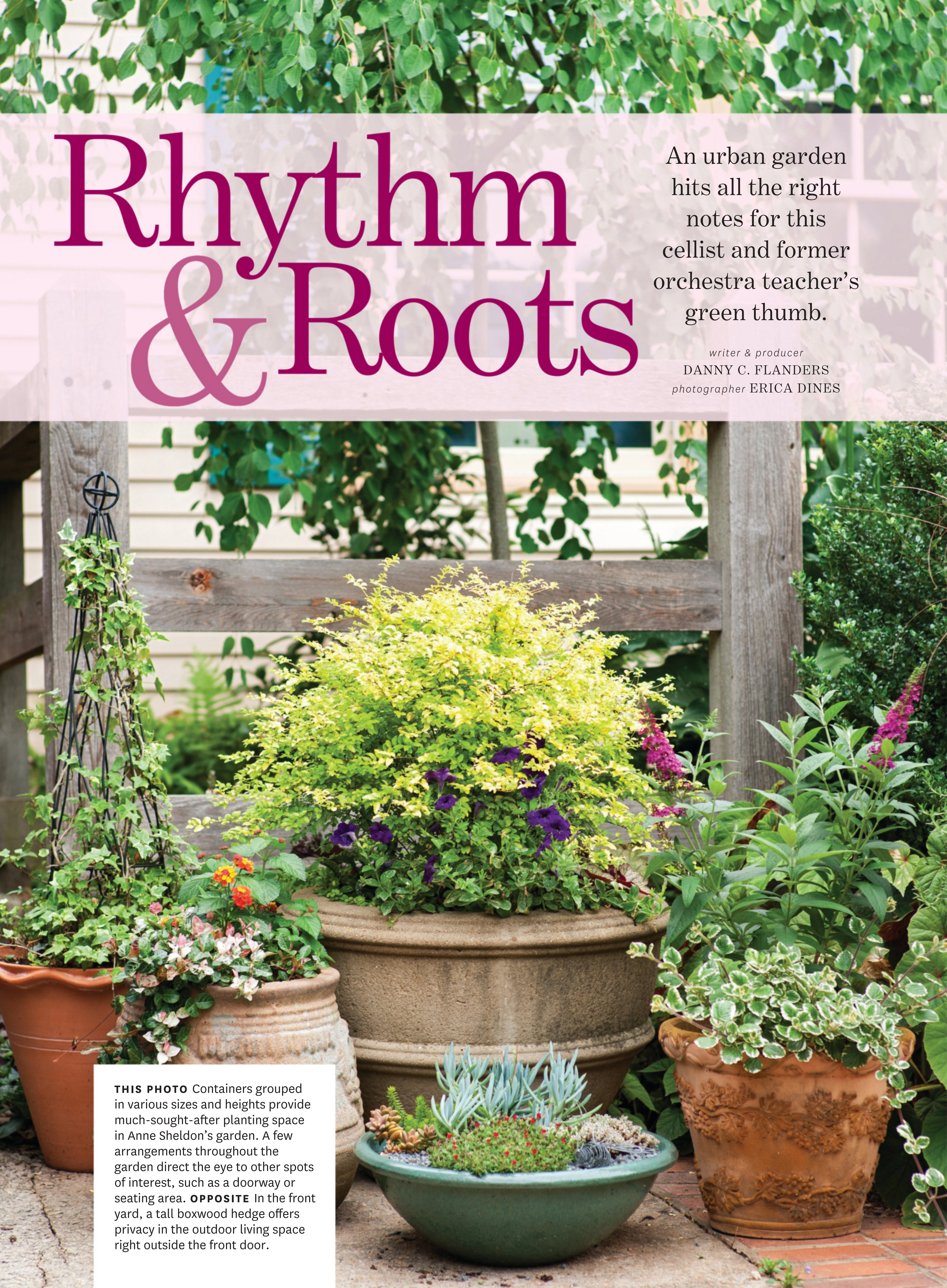
Vines planted in large containers climb a trio of trellises to create shade and a sense of enclosure over the lounge set. Pots of varying heights filled with fragrant alyssum, stock, carnations, freesias, and roses encircle the outdoor room. “My whole thing is flowers,” Barbara says. “You don’t need a huge space to have a lot of them.” Large pots elevate her half-dozen roses—‘Disneyland’ and ‘Iceberg’ are her favorites—to eye level and make them easier to tend and prune. She plants annuals, bulbs, and diminutive perennials around the roses, “so when they go dormant, it doesn’t matter.” Blooms are always on call here.

ABOVE A love seat and table tuck into an alcove between the home and garage under a 48×28-inch mirror that “reflects the garden and creates the illusion of a window in the wall,” Barbara says. Different-size pots of varying heights are arranged in clusters and hold daisies, verbena, bacopa, lobelia, and more. For lush growth, Barbara fertilizes in early spring and early summer with bat guano tea, which she makes herself: To a trash can full of water, add one box of bat guano and a similar amount of Gro-Power fertilizer, let steep for two to three days, then dole out by the bucketful. “In two to four weeks, the results are dramatic,” she says. **RIGHT** “It’s a nonserious garden,” Barbara says. The immersive experience of sitting amid flowers with her husband, Ken, and pups, Chai and Greta, “gives me tremendous joy.”

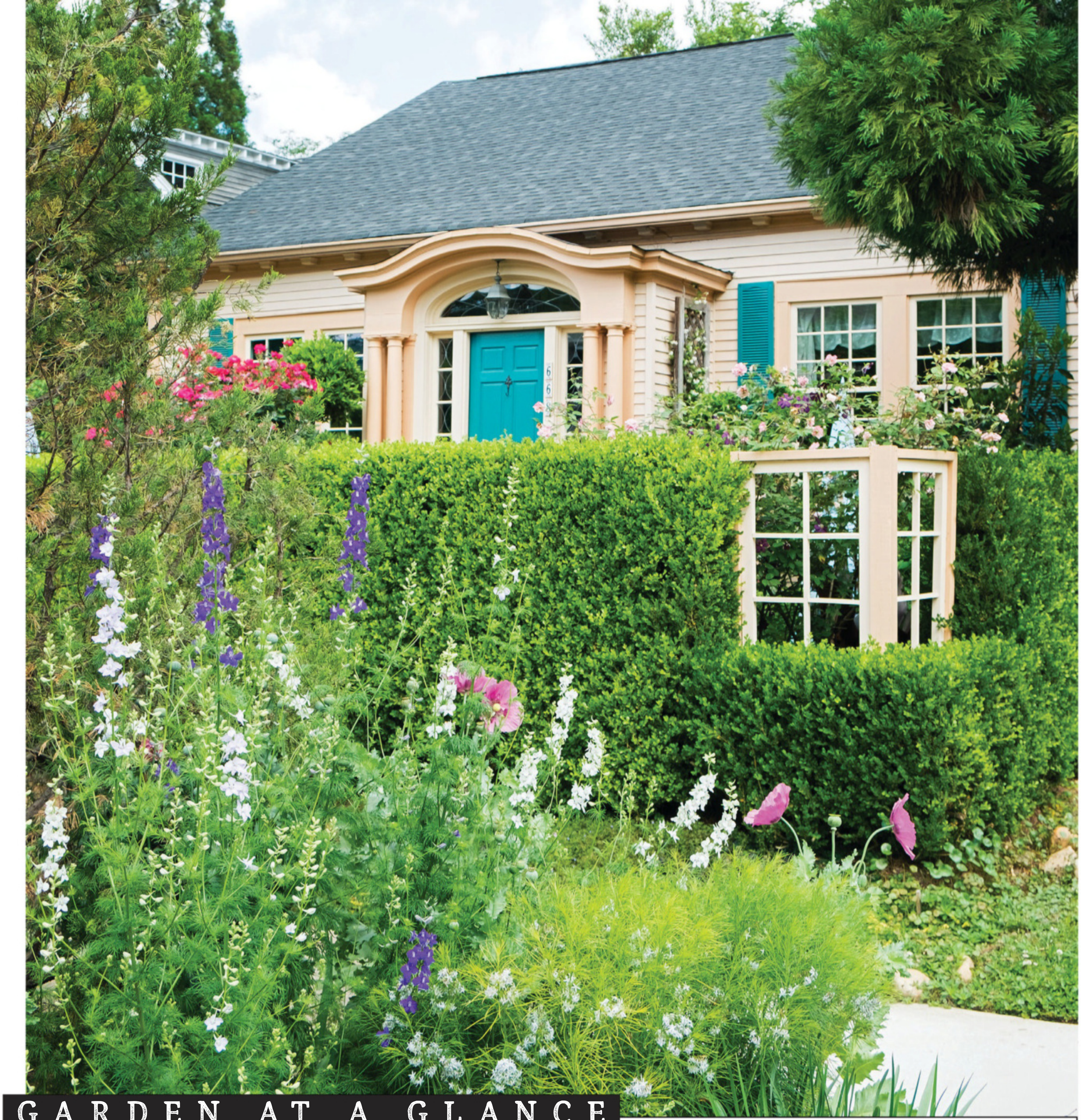
Rhythm & Roots

An urban garden hits all the right notes for this cellist and former orchestra teacher's green thumb.

writer & producer
DANNY C. FLANDERS
photographer ERICA DINES



THIS PHOTO Containers grouped in various sizes and heights provide much-sought-after planting space in Anne Sheldon's garden. A few arrangements throughout the garden direct the eye to other spots of interest, such as a doorway or seating area. **OPPOSITE** In the front yard, a tall boxwood hedge offers privacy in the outdoor living space right outside the front door.



GARDEN AT A GLANCE

NARROW URBAN LOT • ATLANTA, GEORGIA • ZONES 7B/8A

THE DESIGN

Tight spaces. Close neighbors. Noisy traffic. For musician Anne Sheldon, these obstacles only helped her become a better urban gardener. "Rhythm, form, repetition, and texture in sound—it works the same way in visual composition," she says. When Anne and her husband, Andy, first moved into their home, they hired landscape architect Edward Daugherty to design a plan. They replaced the front lawn with slate pavers to form a small terrace and pathway to the front stoop, then planted Korean boxwood hedges, *above,* to create a partially walled garden and block the street. A window on the corner of the hedge lets passersby peek into the front garden. A sidewalk leads to the backyard, where several seating areas provide vantage points from which to view Anne's labor.

THE PLANTS

Anne devoted the small full-sun front garden to potted plants, beds of roses, hydrangeas, and a few evergreens for winter interest. The bold color palette spills with foxgloves, peonies, clematis, and poppies; sedums and other succulents placed in stone troughs make for low-maintenance accents. In the tight, mostly shaded backyard, Anne planted small trees to act as screens and offer privacy from nearby neighbors. Spiky plants, such as snapdragons and delphiniums, are one of Anne's secrets to getting the most flower power out of her compact space. "We live in this garden and use every inch in it," she says.

1

> “I wanted it all when we bought the house—sun, shade, part shade. I wanted every room to look out into the garden.”
>
> —HOMEOWNER ANNE SHELDON

2

3

4

1 The Sheldons enjoy working and playing in their urban oasis, especially the tiny front garden—a favorite retreat for both morning coffee and evening wine. Anne brightens the hedge-enclosed space with many fragrant white-blooming plants, such as ‘Annabelle’ hydrangea and ‘Madonna’ lilies *(Lilium candidum).* *2* The front entrance is marked by complementary colors, especially chartreuse and turquoise in the potted plants. Sedums and other succulents thrive in the sunny garden where slate pavers and pea gravel form a casual hardscape. *Ligustrum* topiaries and ornamental grasses add height to the landscape. *3* Anne doesn’t rely on just trees and shrubs to create height throughout her tiny garden. She incorporates vines and structures, such as this bright blue obelisk that forms the perfect foil for a winding purple clematis. Identical obelisks repeat throughout the garden for continuity. *4* Anne, a self-described plant addict, groups containers in various sizes and heights to provide sought-after planting space and direct the eye to focal points. *5* A tall bird feeder arch accents the terraced backyard, which descends to a brick patio. Shade-loving plants fill terra-cotta pots and narrow beds along the edges of the patio.

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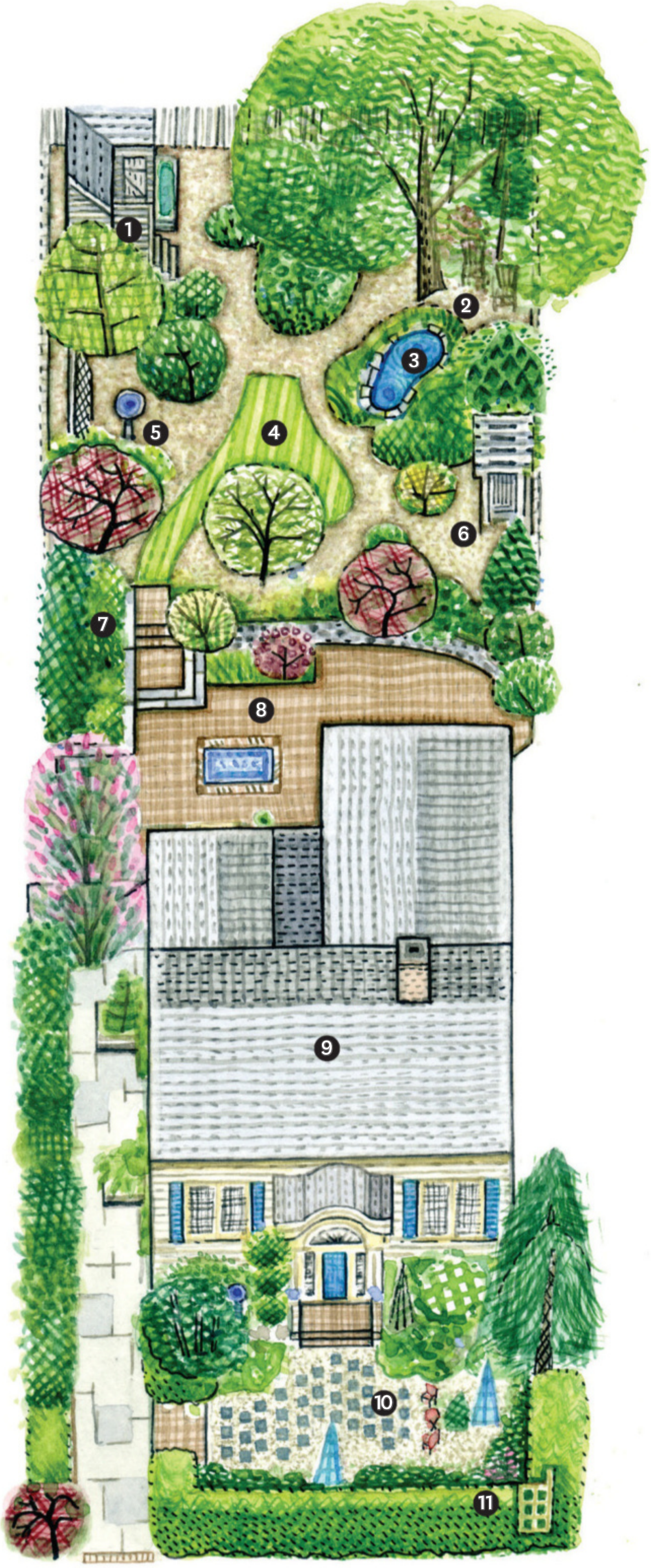
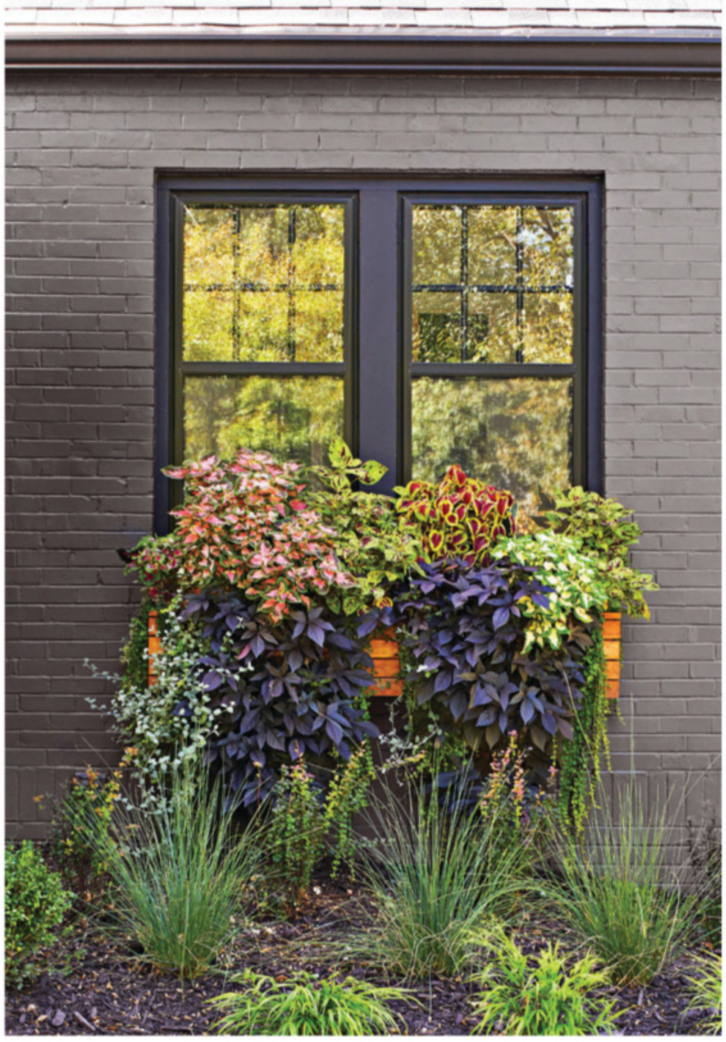


THE GARDEN PLAN

1. Potting shed
2. Adirondack seating area
3. Pond
4. Lawn area
5. Birdbath fountain
6. Arbor swing
7. Bird feeder arch
8. Patio dining area
9. House
10. Front garden and seating area
11. Boxwood hedge with window

THREE SEASONS WINDOW BOX

A window box provides the base to swap out seasonal plants, accents, and dried foliage to give your house a joyful boost of style throughout the year.

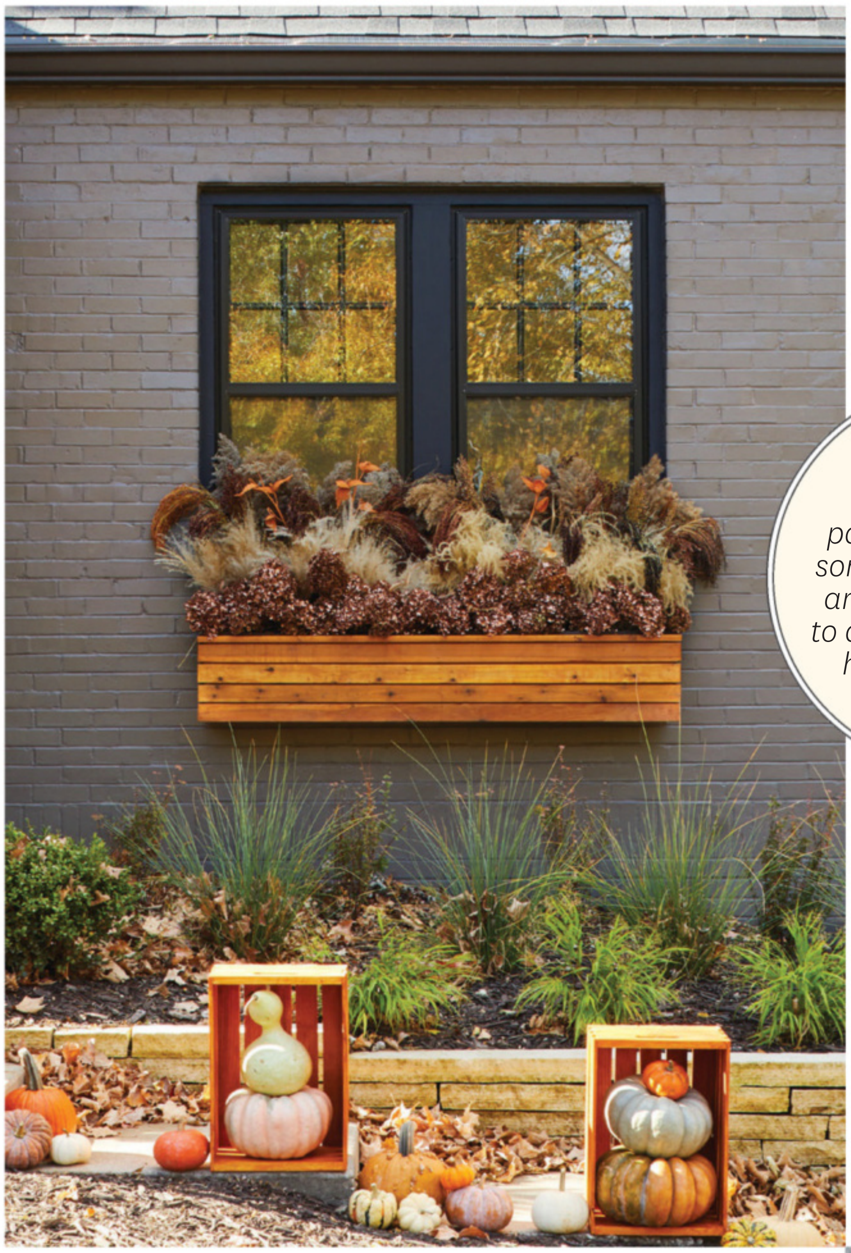


SPRING/SUMMER

The key to toeing the line between romantic and chaotic is planting in levels and using contrasting colors. Fill your box (or boxes) with soil, then plant from back to front. A plush mix of coleus plants in a rainbow of tie dye-like hues grows upward and fills out the center; black sweet potato vine, licorice plant, and creeping Jenny tuck around the box to spill off the edge, *above* and *right*.

SMART DESIGN

This box was built with an open bottom to lessen the planter's weight. Two plastic window box containers rest inside for easy planting and watering.

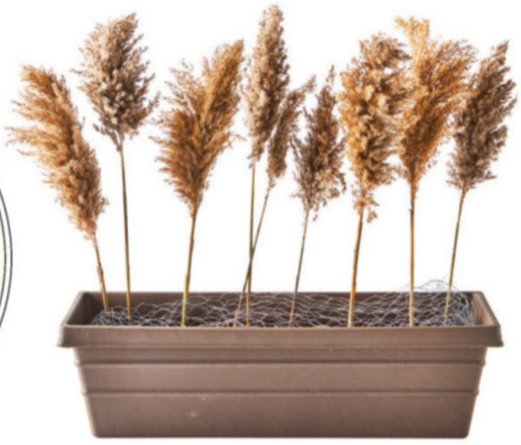


FALL

Once the weather shifts, remove the foliage and soil from the plastic window boxes and replace with dried plumes, *left*. To hold the stems upright, roll chicken wire into a column and nest inside the box, *below*. Start by sticking pampas grass at the back of the boxes, trimming the stems as needed. Work your way forward, nestling other elements in the chicken wire.

BALANCE

We used a mix of pampas grass, dried sorghum, fallen sticks, and dried hydrangea to add varying levels of height and texture to the box.



WINTER

Swap autumnal hues for holiday reds and greens, *below*. We placed a DIY birch house in the center as an eye-catching anchor, then used the chicken wire base from our fall box to hold this season's foliage. Start by sticking spruce tips (we used one tall and one short) on either side of the house, then layer bunches of dogwood and winterberry. Line the perimeter of the box with magnolia leaf branches, flip-flopping the stems to reveal their rust-color underbelly.

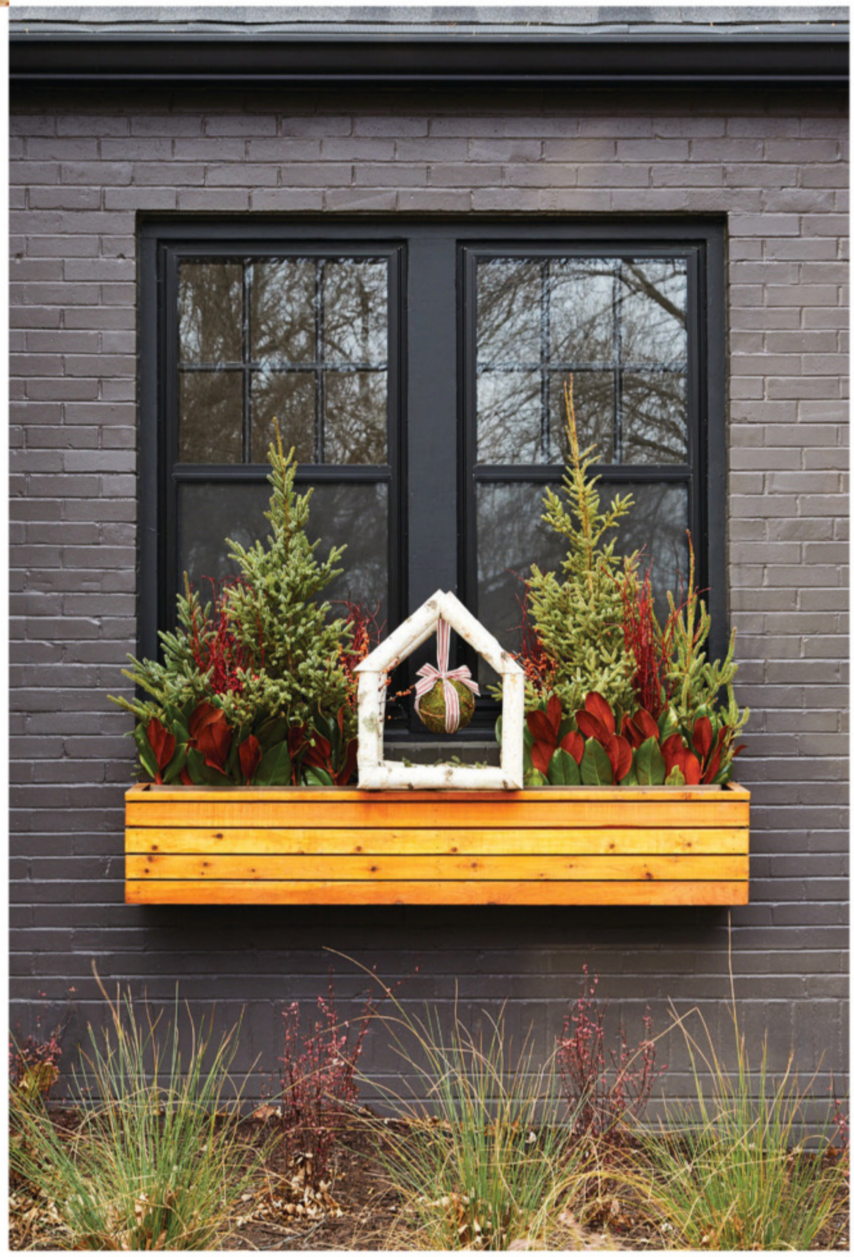
PICK & PREP THE RIGHT BOX

❶ **BOX STYLE** Try to choose a window box that echoes the architecture of your home, be it sleek curves for a modern house or paneled for traditional. Find a good selection of planters at home decor shops, big box stores like Walmart, and larger hardware stores.

❷ **SIZE** Most prefabricated window boxes are 36 inches long. You can find longer and shorter containers—make sure to measure your window and get the correct size.

❸ **INSTALLING** Use the accompanying sturdy metal brackets to support the boxes. Be sure to drill into structural studs because the boxes get heavy once planted and irrigated.

❹ **WATERING** Many boxes either have predrilled holes or are self-watering, allowing plants to draw up moisture from a reservoir. If you need to drill your own holes, make them closer to the edge farthest from the house so the water doesn't run down your home's exterior. A trick for aiding drainage: Line the bottom of the box with old wine corks, cover them with landscape fabric, and then add soil.



PHOTOGRAPHER: MARTY BALDWIN; PRODUCER: JENI WRIGHT

ECO-FRIENDLY CONTAINERS

Seed flats are super easy for planting, but you can use items from your recycling bin too.

STRIPS OF ROLLED NEWSPAPER

CUT-DOWN MILK JUGS

CARDBOARD EGG CARTONS

YOGURT CUPS

DISPOSABLE PANS

START SEEDS INDOORS

It’s simpler than you think—and can be done with items you might already have on hand.

① **FIGURE OUT THE AVERAGE LAST FROST DATE FOR YOUR AREA** Just search online for “average last frost date.”

② **CHOOSE YOUR SEEDS** If it’s your first time starting seeds, go small. Pick just one or two types to experiment with.

③ **LOOK ON THE PACKAGE LABEL** There you’ll find the number of weeks you’re supposed to start seeds indoors before the average last frost date. Count backward from that frost date—usually about six to eight weeks—to determine when to start those seeds indoors.

④ **TO START SEEDS, YOU’LL NEED:**

SEED-STARTING POTS They should have drainage holes in the bottom.

SEED-STARTING MIX This is a lighter-weight cousin to regular potting mix.

LABELS FOR EACH POT Popsicle sticks work great for this.

⑤ **FILL THE POTS WITH SEED-STARTING MIX** And then moisten. The mix should be damp but not soggy—a spray bottle helps. You also can get the mix wet before adding it to the containers.

⑥ **GENTLY PRESS SEEDS INTO EACH CONTAINER** If the seed package label advises it, cover the seeds lightly—but don’t pat down the seed-starting mix.

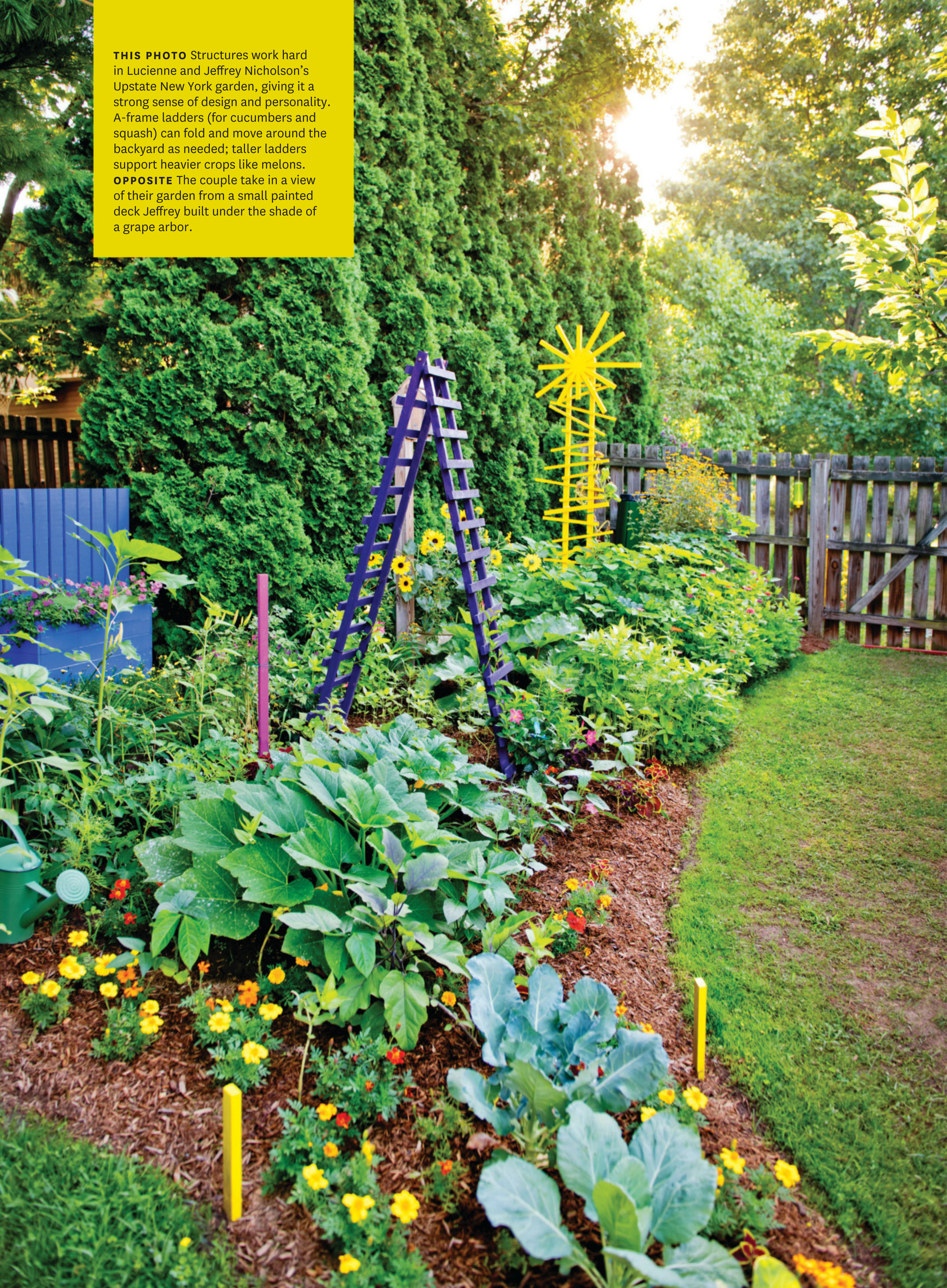
⑦ **LABEL YOUR POTS** You’ll want to know what’s growing where.

⑧ **LOOSELY COVER THE POTS** Use clear plastic wrap to help maintain humidity and warmth.

⑨ **PLACE YOUR SEED POTS IN THE RIGHT LOCATION** It should be warm and free of drafts, but not in direct sun. The ideal temp is about 75°F but not hotter than 90°F. (Once the tiny seedlings emerge, they’re comfortable at about 70°F.) Sunlight is a big deal too—aim for about 12 hours a day. To supplement natural daylight, place the pots up close to a low-intensity light, like undercabinet lights in a kitchen.

START SEEDS OUTSIDE

Some plants are quick enough growers that the seeds can be planted right in the ground—after the outside temps and soil have sufficiently warmed up. To plant them, just check the directions on the seed package label. Cover with as much soil as directed, then lightly water. Some seeds—like marigolds and zinnias—you can just scatter.

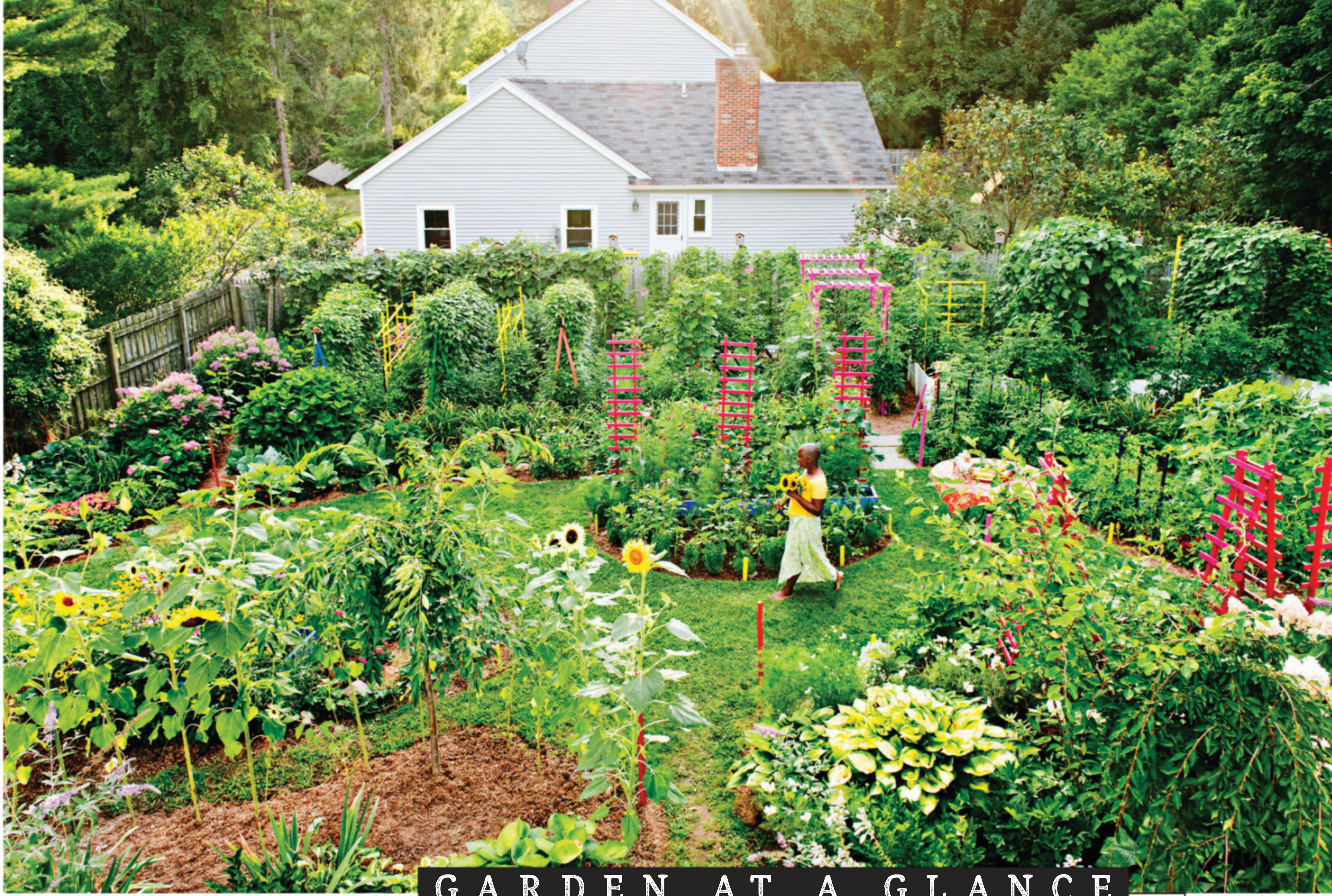


THIS PHOTO Structures work hard in Lucienne and Jeffrey Nicholson's Upstate New York garden, giving it a strong sense of design and personality. A-frame ladders (for cucumbers and squash) can fold and move around the backyard as needed; taller ladders support heavier crops like melons. **OPPOSITE** The couple take in a view of their garden from a small painted deck Jeffrey built under the shade of a grape arbor.

PAINTED PARADISE

Memories of childhood in Haiti and a love of color provide the inspiration for this bright backyard garden.

writer CHRISTINE FROEHLICH *photographer* GABRIELA HERMAN



ABOVE Trellises, ladders, and arbors bring height to the flat plot and, when bare, distribute color through the yard. When plants mature and cover the structures in green, "they create peaks and valleys that copy nature," Lucienne says. **BELOW** Lucienne finds joy in tending (and harvesting) her garden.

GARDEN AT A GLANCE

68×102-FOOT BACKYARD

PITTSFORD, NEW YORK • ZONE 6B

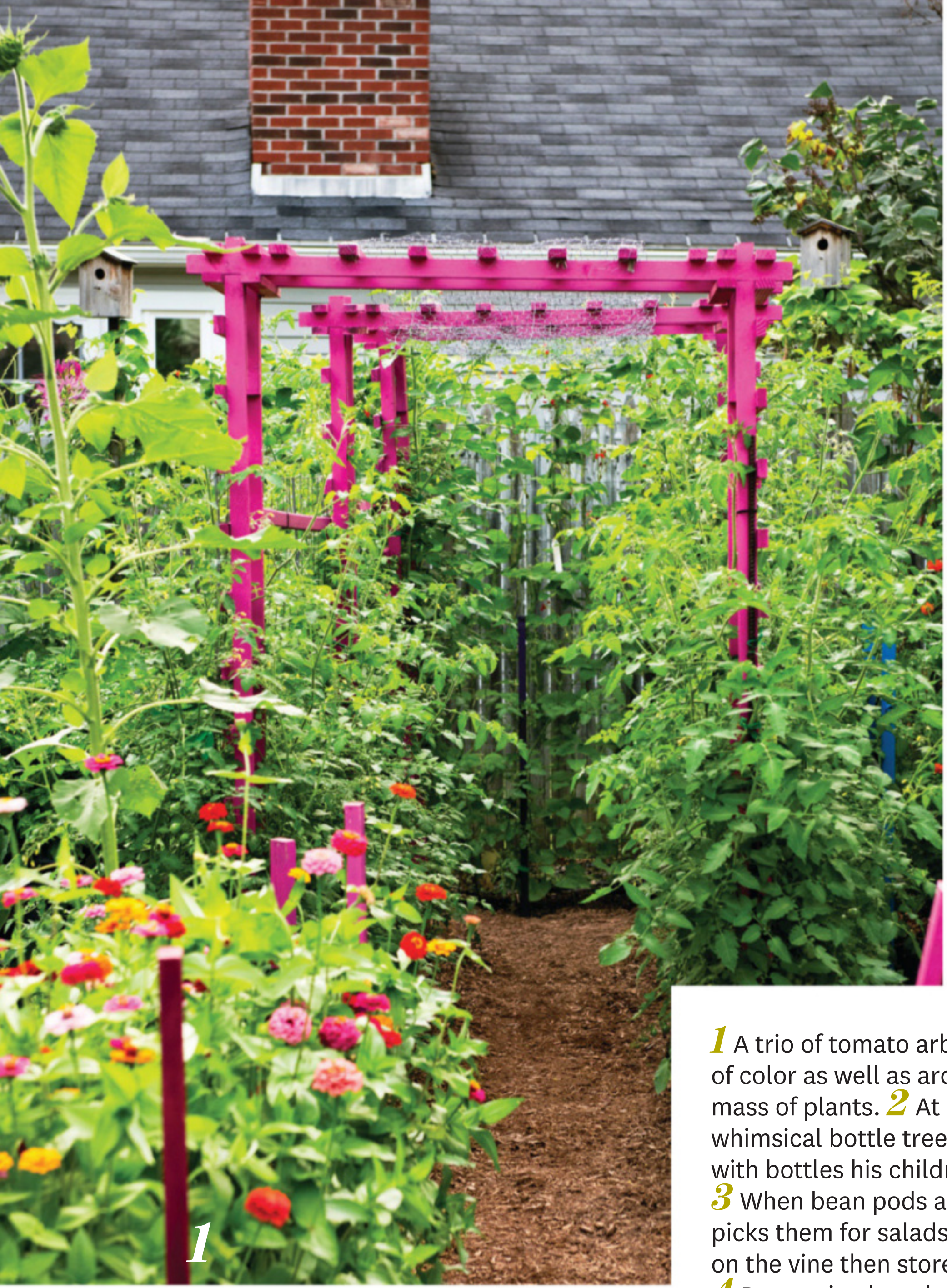
THE DESIGN

Nestled into a suburban backyard in Upstate New York, Lucienne and Jeffrey Nicholson's garden is a bit livelier than your typical green space. Instead of a tidy lawn, the plot is dense with vegetables and flowers and—most notably—studded with brightly painted arbors and trellises. "The colors amplify the green in the garden," Lucienne says. "And they nurture the spirit." Jeffrey, an industrial arts teacher of 37 years, is responsible for the structures. "Lucienne didn't want anything traditional," he says. "I do the building; she decides on the colors."

THE PLANTS

The garden was inspired by Lucienne's childhood in Haiti. "I'm always trying to re-create my grandmother's farm," she says. As on that farm, vegetables, fruits, and herbs grow together in the couple's garden, and managed wildness rules—volunteer plants are welcome, even a few weeds. "Plants tell us where they want to be and what they want to connect with," Lucienne says.

Tomatoes hang from fuchsia arbors. Sweet potatoes spill out of deep purple containers. Even lowly garden stakes are painted bright hues. The result is a sensory mix of flowers, food, and color so reminiscent of Lucienne's childhood that the couple affectionately refer to their yard as "the farm."



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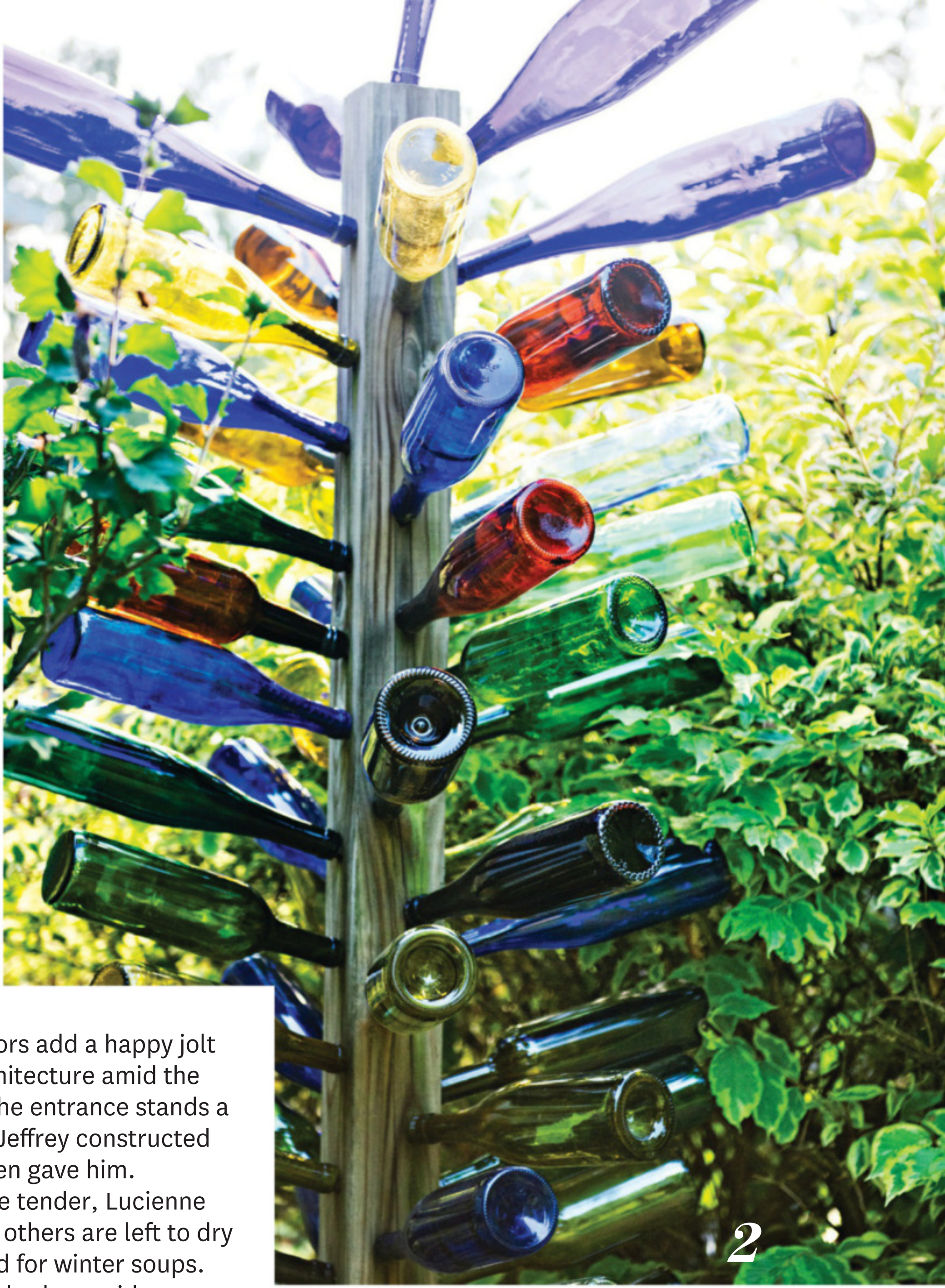

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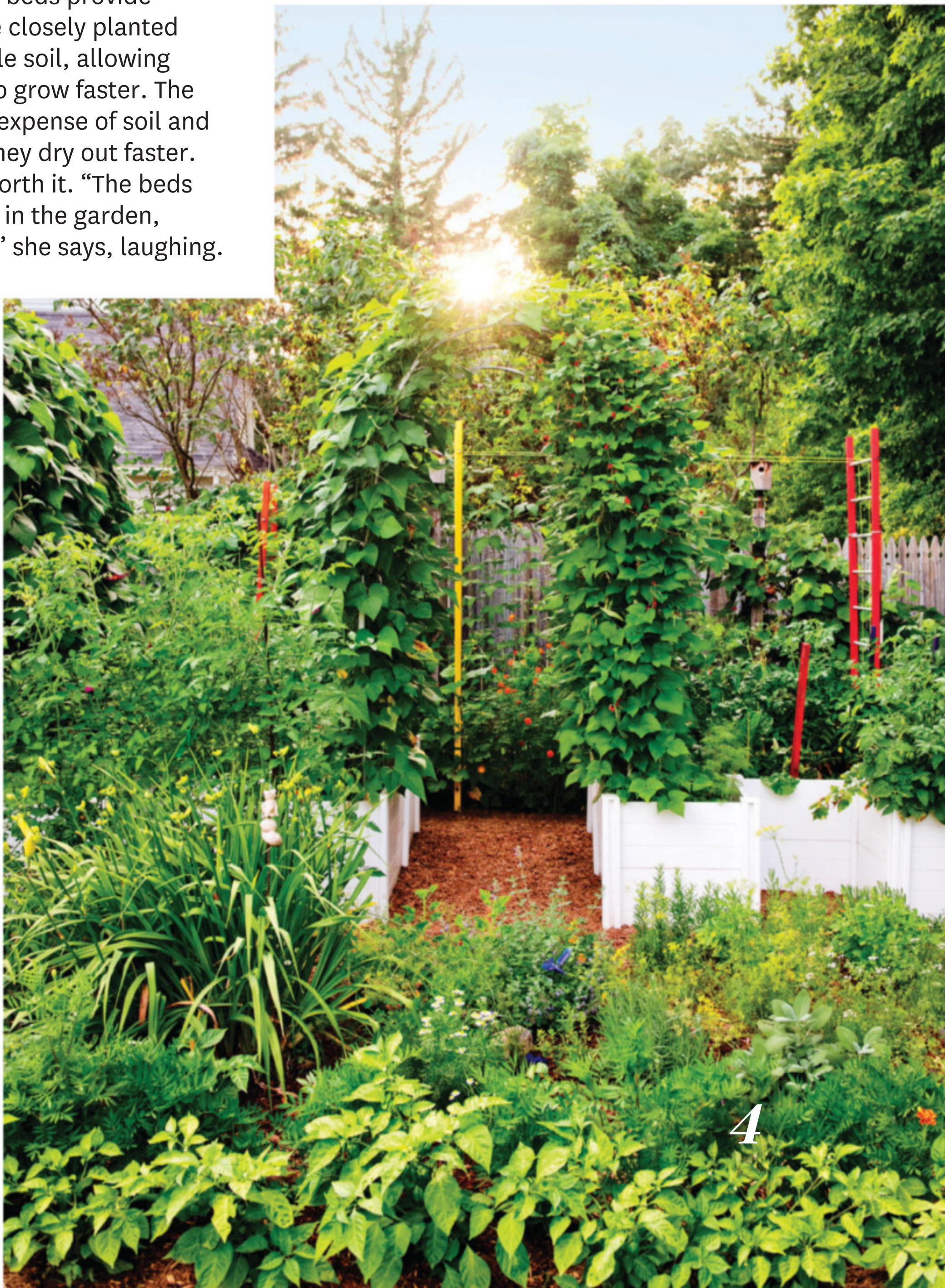

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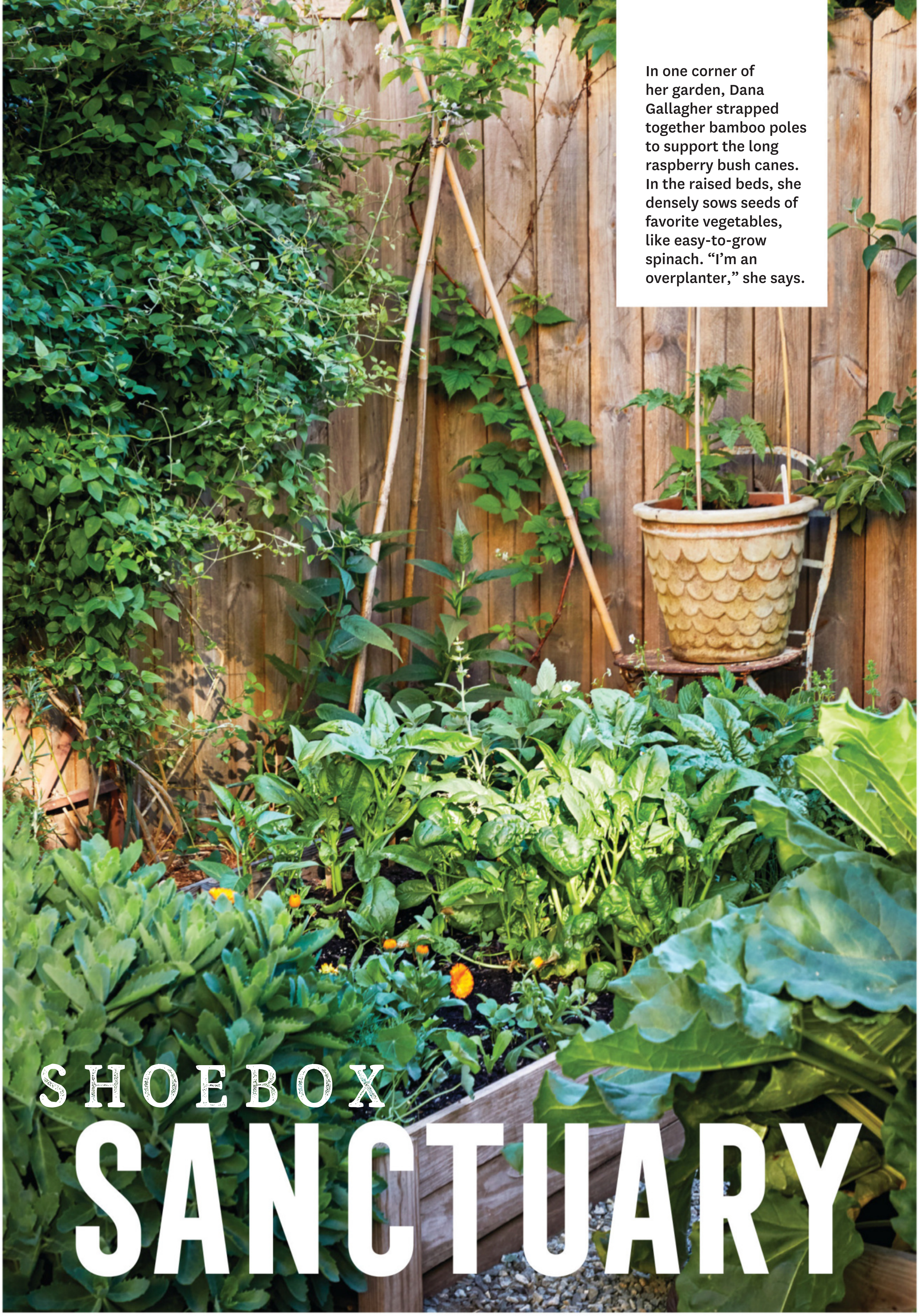
1 A trio of tomato arbors add a happy jolt of color as well as architecture amid the mass of plants. *2* At the entrance stands a whimsical bottle tree Jeffrey constructed with bottles his children gave him. *3* When bean pods are tender, Lucienne picks them for salads; others are left to dry on the vine then stored for winter soups. *4* Deep raised garden beds provide benefits. Crops can be closely planted in the beds' rich, friable soil, allowing more room for roots to grow faster. The downsides: the initial expense of soil and the extra watering—they dry out faster. But for Lucienne it's worth it. "The beds make it easier to work in the garden, especially as you age," she says, laughing.



In one corner of her garden, Dana Gallagher strapped together bamboo poles to support the long raspberry bush canes. In the raised beds, she densely sows seeds of favorite vegetables, like easy-to-grow spinach. “I’m an overplanter,” she says.

SHOEBOX SANCTUARY

A small lot, a few raised beds, and a couple of trellises provide this mother-daughter duo with fresh produce in their own Brooklyn backyard.

writer JOHANNA SILVER *photographer & producer* DANA GALLAGHER

GARDEN AT A GLANCE

40×20 FEET

BROOKLYN, NEW YORK

ZONE 7B

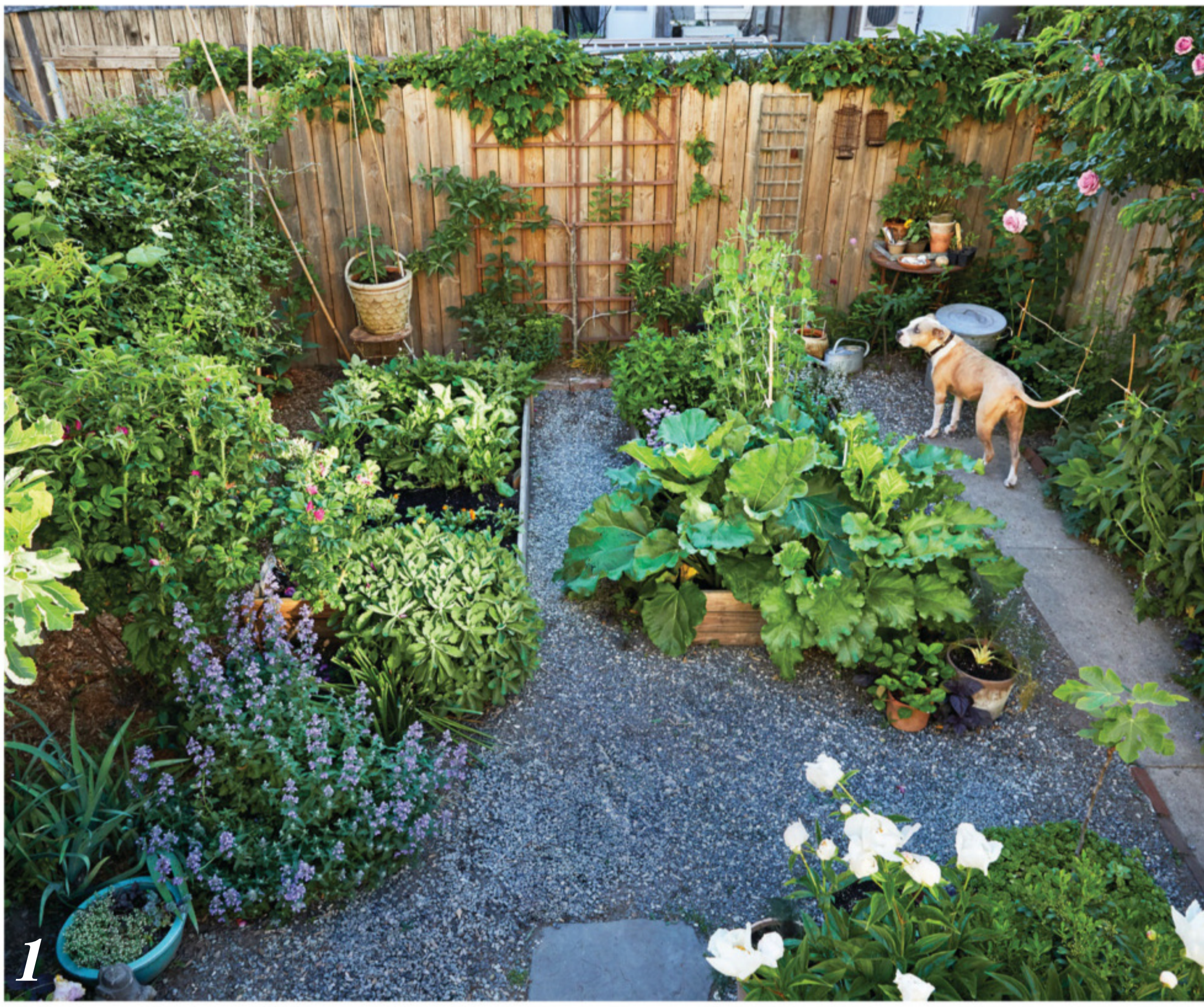
THE DESIGN

Just outside the back door of Dana Gallagher's home, a small plot of land held a couple of raised beds. But about five years ago, she decided to really dig in and maximize the shoebox-like space. She added an espaliered apple tree ("A Home Depot find," she delights) and a trellis for training cucumbers upward.

On top of practical benefits (like fewer trips to the grocery store), the garden has become Dana's sanctuary. "I poke around at everything in the morning with my coffee and again anytime I take a break from my desk."

THE PLANTS

With the help of local nursery staff Dana taps for advice, she has found success with bumper crops of lettuce, snap peas, and okra. "You don't need to be an expert to garden," she says. "You just need to read a label, do the math, and cross your fingers."



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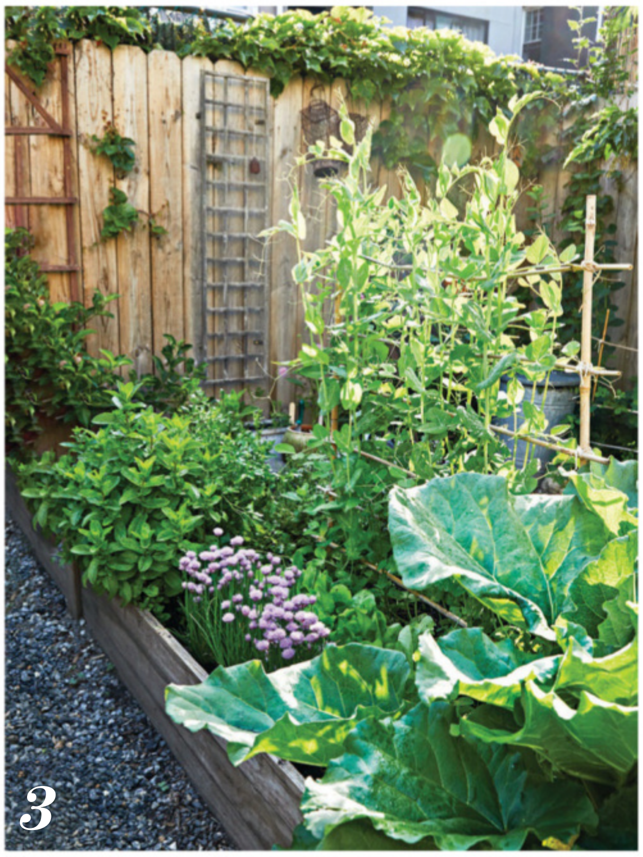

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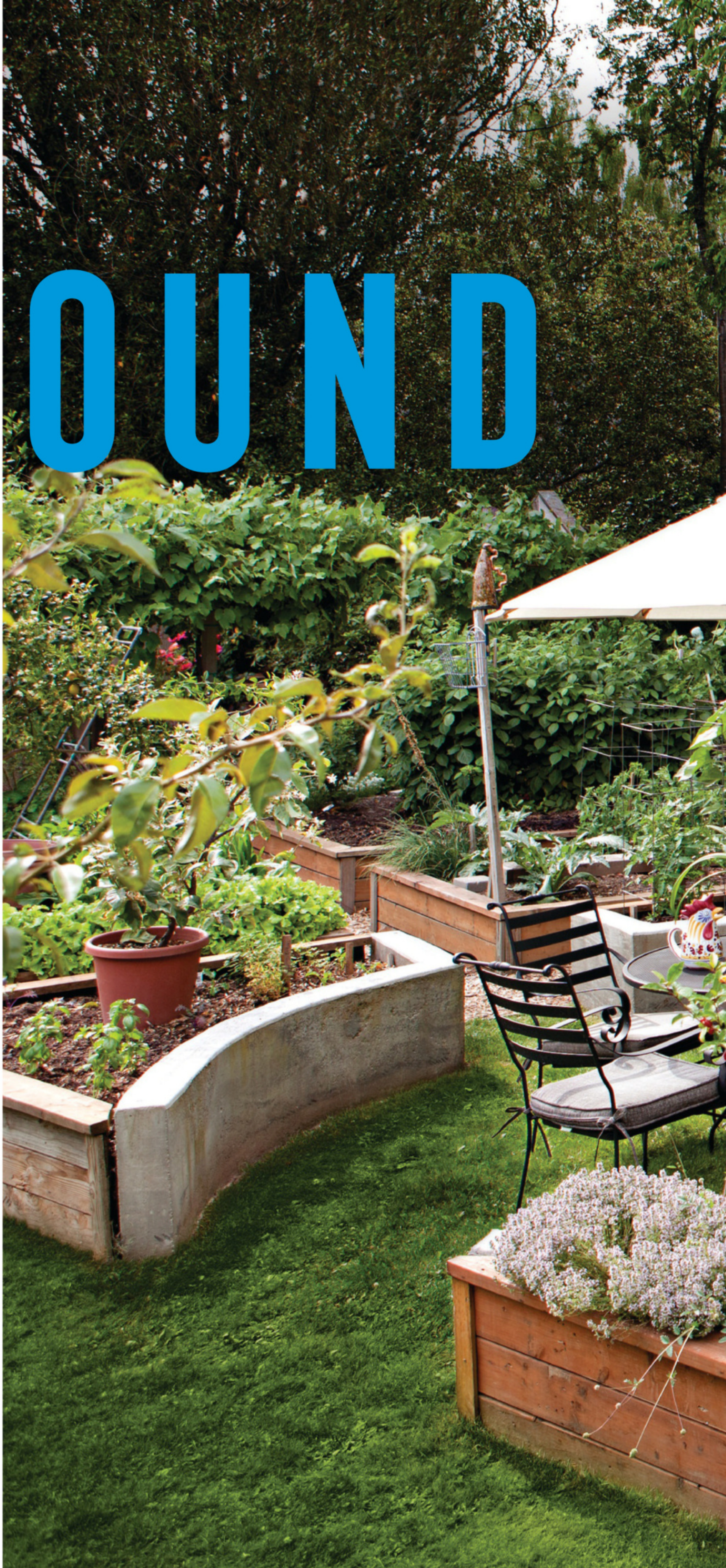
4

1 Dana's petite patch of heaven provides a space to grow food and clear her head. Perennials like peonies and rhubarb supply structure; she fills any holes with seasonal annuals. *2* Daughter Imogen lends her hand in the backyard with some light weeding. "Part of my motivation for this garden was to create a space for us to enjoy," Dana says. Their dog, Biscuit, on the other hand, creates challenges. "I'm always reworking something because someone decided to bury a bone somewhere," she says. *3* Dana saves money by using salvaged materials to construct the raised beds and buying out-of-bloom perennials off the sale rack. In this bed, giant rhubarb leaves, flowering chives, and mint provide perennial edging. Trellised snap peas shade the 'Little Gem' lettuce growing at the base. *4* Star-shape okra pods are as pretty on the plant as they are tasty. Dana likes roasting them with a little garam masala.

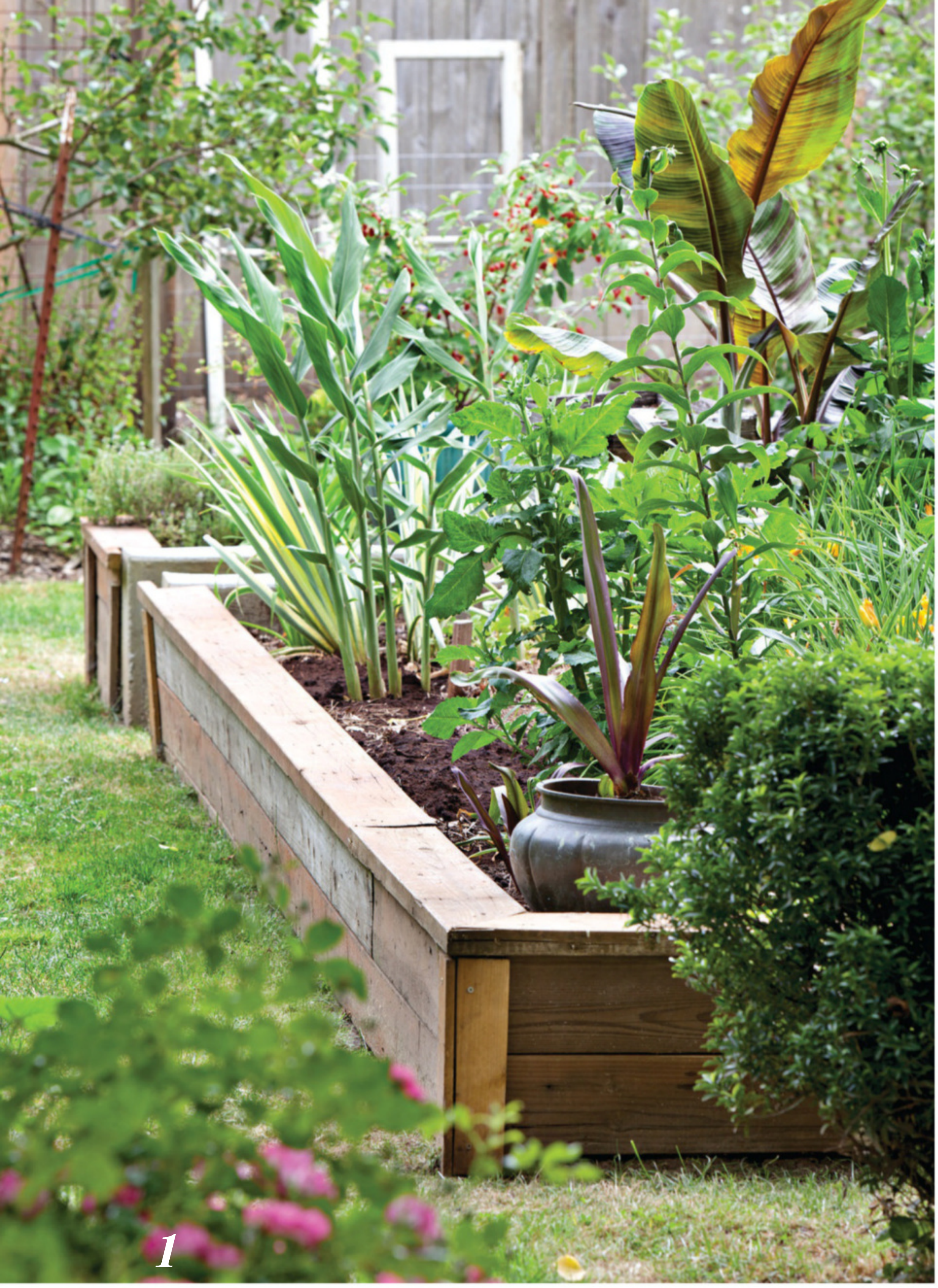
COMMON GROUND

Connection and cultivation grow abundantly in this home's thriving backyard.

writer MARY-KATE MACKEY
photographer LAURIE BLACK



"It looks a little like a Maltese cross," says Vern Nelson of the center raised beds in his and Mary Sherman's backyard. Four grass pathways allow access to an interior circle right-sized for cozy dinner parties. The 20-inch-tall raised beds double as extended seating—"the perfect height to rest on," Vern says. A mix of materials make up the bed walls: cast concrete for the interior curves and cedar salvaged from a neighbor's deck as the straight sides. In spring, the concrete retains warmth to jump-start heat-loving vegetables like chiles, tomatillos, and eggplants. For people seated around the circle, the concrete radiates the day's sunshine.



> “I WANT TO FEED PEOPLE. I WANT TO TAKE BETTER CARE OF THE EARTH.”
>
> —HOMEOWNER VERN NELSON

1 A salvaged-cedar raised bed gives hints of the tropics with butterfly lilies *(Hedychium coronarium)* growing upright at the back and dark-leaf pineapple lily *(Eucomis comosa)* in the container. On the right, a Japanese fiber banana *(Musa basjoo)* displays its broad green-and-maroon foliage. “The leaves make great wrappers for various dishes,” Vern says. **2** The cedar-post arbor that Vern built holds table grapes ‘Swenson Red’, ‘New York Muscat’, ‘Canadice’, and ‘Lon’s Seedling’. **3** Red orach *(Atriplex hortensis)*—also known as mountain spinach—is easy to grow and performs double-duty in the garden. Vern and Mary use the leaves in salads and sandwiches. The 4- to 6-foot stems are slow to bolt, but when they do, the flowers add sparkle to arrangements. **4** Vern holds one member of their flock of handsome chickens, and Mary carries Andy, their Italian greyhound. For culinary reasons, the chickens are not named. **5** This limequat (*Citrus* x *aurantifolia* x *Fortunella* spp. ‘Eustis’) is a cross between Mexican lime and kumquat. It fruits all year, with the biggest crop around Christmas. For winter protection, Vern rolls the 25-gallon pottery container into the greenhouse or office. “I’d hate to lose it. Mary likes it for margaritas,” he says.

GARDEN AT A GLANCE

⅓-ACRE PROPERTY

PORTLAND, OREGON

ZONE 8B

THE DESIGN

Mary Sherman and Vern Nelson leave a spot at the table for everyone. Their 1940s house and garden were originally platted to provide room for World War II Victory Gardens, but when Mary bought it in the early 2000s, the yard needed help. Once clear of debris, it could return to its roots. The couple created a kitchen garden with raised beds at the heart of the space; a grape arbor and espaliered apples added more structure. Next came the sharing: A table at the center seats guests, a pizza oven cooks whatever people bring, and produce from their beds and local supermarkets (overflow gets dropped at their door every Monday) feeds anyone in need. “We have a pretty open-door policy,” Mary says.

THE PLANTS

Vern prefers low-care veggies that can take off and grow—tomatoes, spinach, and lettuces. “I’m a practical guy,” he says. “I don’t want plants that need a heart massage—you know, miss one night of telling them fairy stories and they die on you.”

Cedar posts support three espaliered apple varieties (‘Ashmead’s Kernel’, ‘Erwin Bauer’, ‘Tydeman’s Late Orange’). And a raised bed holds a mix of lavender plants—“We use lavender in everything,” Vern says.

2

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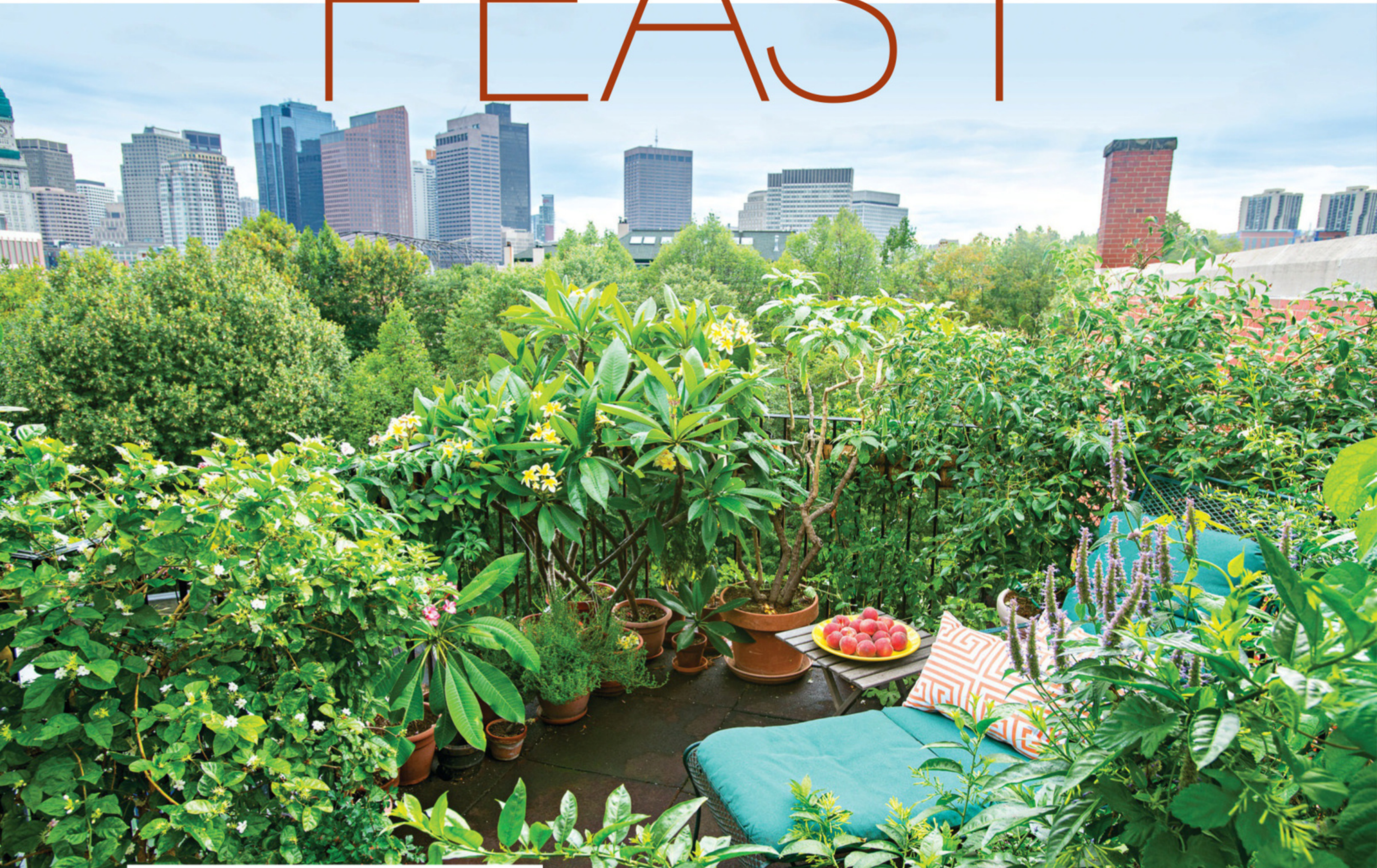
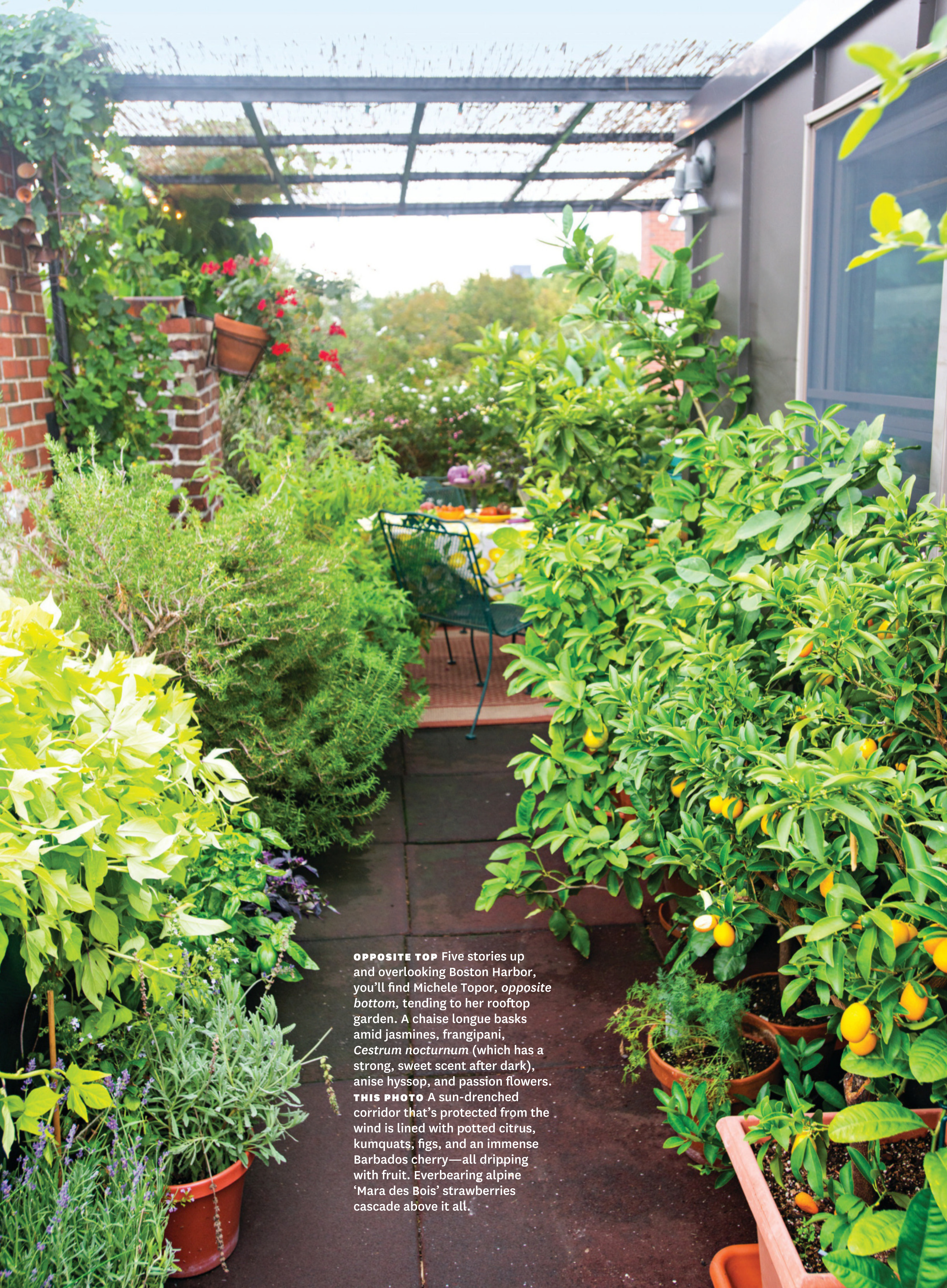
SKY-GROWN FEAST

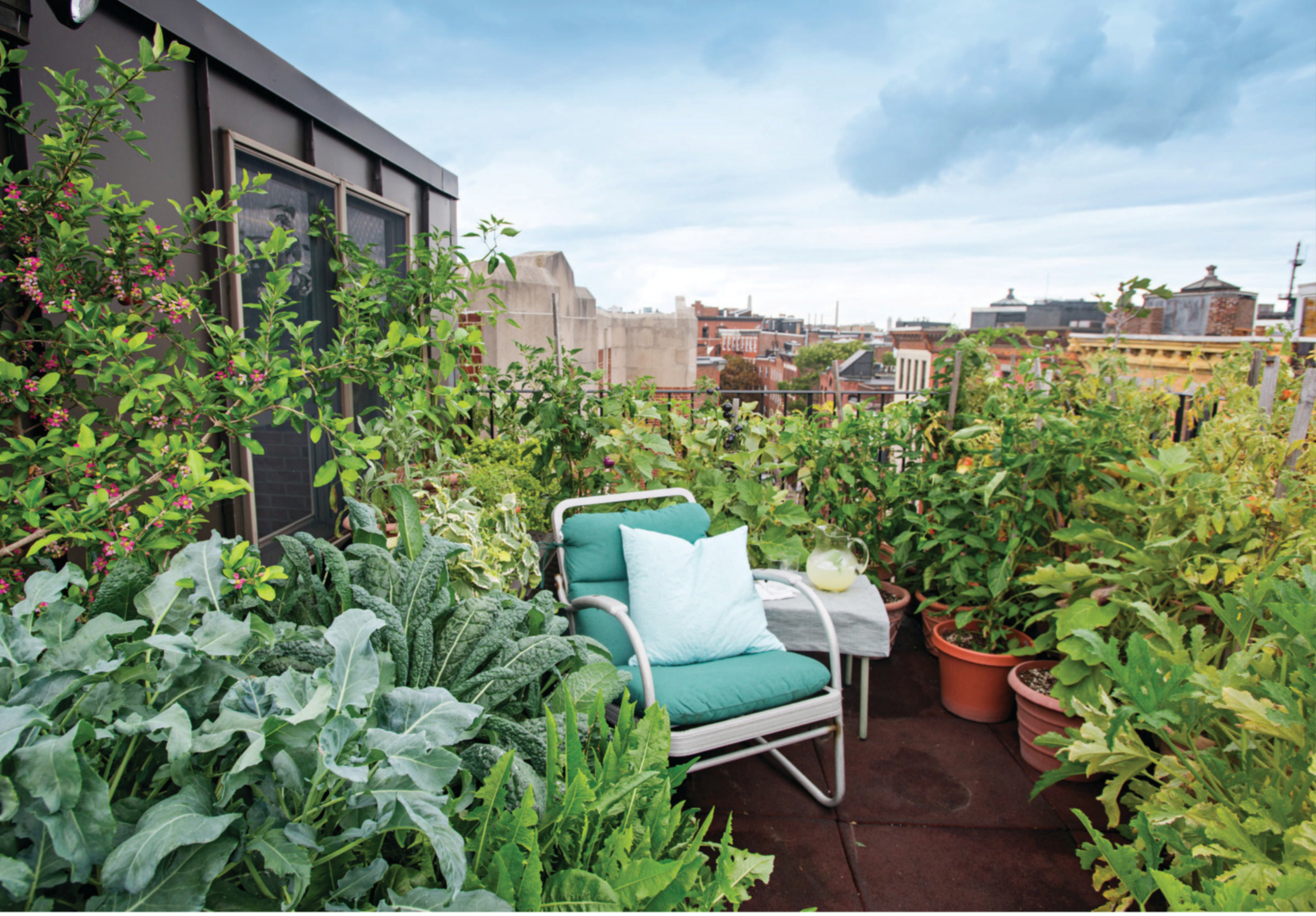


In the heart of Boston, an apartment-dweller turned her rooftop garden into a culinary retreat with a bounty of veggies and fruits.

writer & producer TOVAH MARTIN *photographer* KINDRA CLINEFF



OPPOSITE TOP Five stories up and overlooking Boston Harbor, you'll find Michele Topor, *opposite bottom,* tending to her rooftop garden. A chaise longue basks amid jasmines, frangipani, *Cestrum nocturnum* (which has a strong, sweet scent after dark), anise hyssop, and passion flowers. **THIS PHOTO** A sun-drenched corridor that's protected from the wind is lined with potted citrus, kumquats, figs, and an immense Barbados cherry—all dripping with fruit. Everbearing alpine 'Mara des Bois' strawberries cascade above it all.



GARDEN AT A GLANCE

100-SQUARE-FOOT ROOFTOP • BOSTON • ZONES 6B/7A

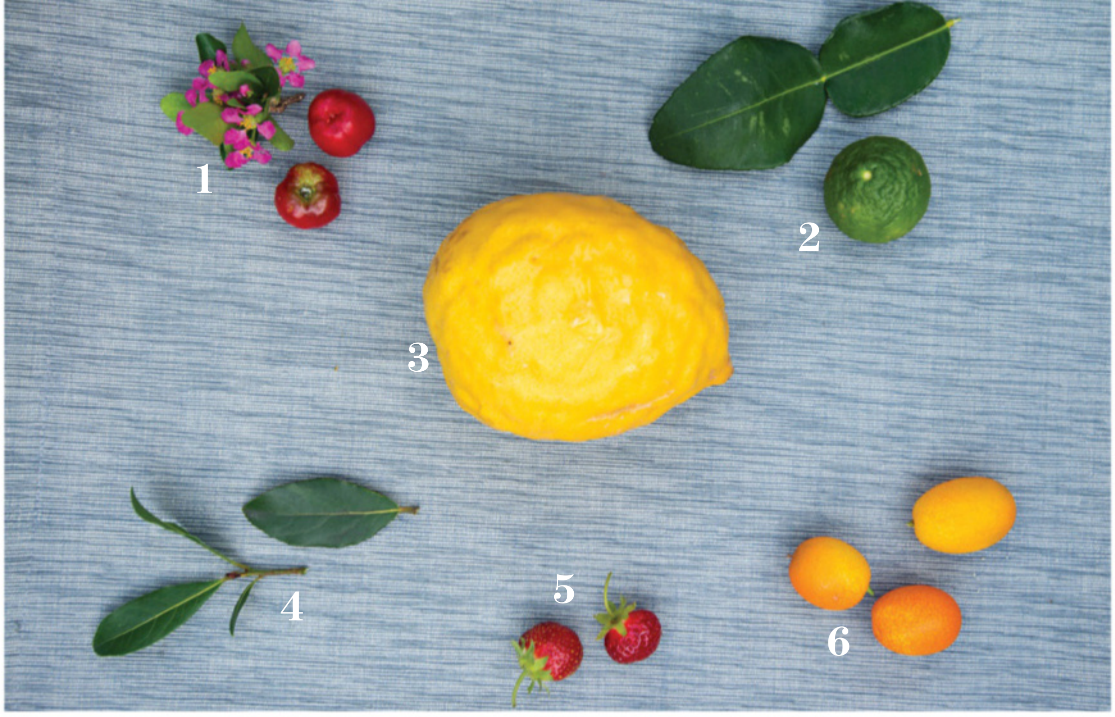
THE DESIGN

Michele Topor is a confessed Italophile—and has 50 trips to Italy to prove it. The registered nurse-turned-chef leads culinary tours abroad and in Boston *(bostonfoodtours.com),* so when she purchased her North End apartment that came with a rooftop, she knew she wanted to model it after Sicilian roof gardens. But first, she had to outfit the space for growing: Michele secured permits, adhered to stringent building regulations, resurfaced the roof with rubber tiles, and learned to heed weight limits when bringing soil onto the rooftop. Along with her many plants, the space is fitted with multiple seating zones from which to admire her plentiful bounty whenever she's not watering, weeding, or harvesting produce.

THE PLANTS

Initially Michele brought back seeds of authentic Italian vegetables from trips abroad, but now she orders seeds from Italy online. Some favorites: 'Spigariello' broccoli raab, 'Red Pear' Pomodoro tomato (the most popular tomato in Northern Italy), 'Catalogna Frastagliata' chicory, and 'Padron' peppers, as well as 'Super Marconi' Rampicante pole beans she savored on the road. Choosing what to grow was a breeze, but the rooftop conditions added other challenges. The sun bakes down and the temperatures swelter, while the wind gusts require Michele to place bricks on most of the pots to keep them in place. When the weather is hot and sunny, each pot gets water twice a day. Even when it rains, supplemental watering is often necessary. Rather than attempting drip irrigation, Michele tends the garden by hand. But she doesn't mind—that's when she can take in all the fragrant blossoms and sample some of her garden's fresh delights.

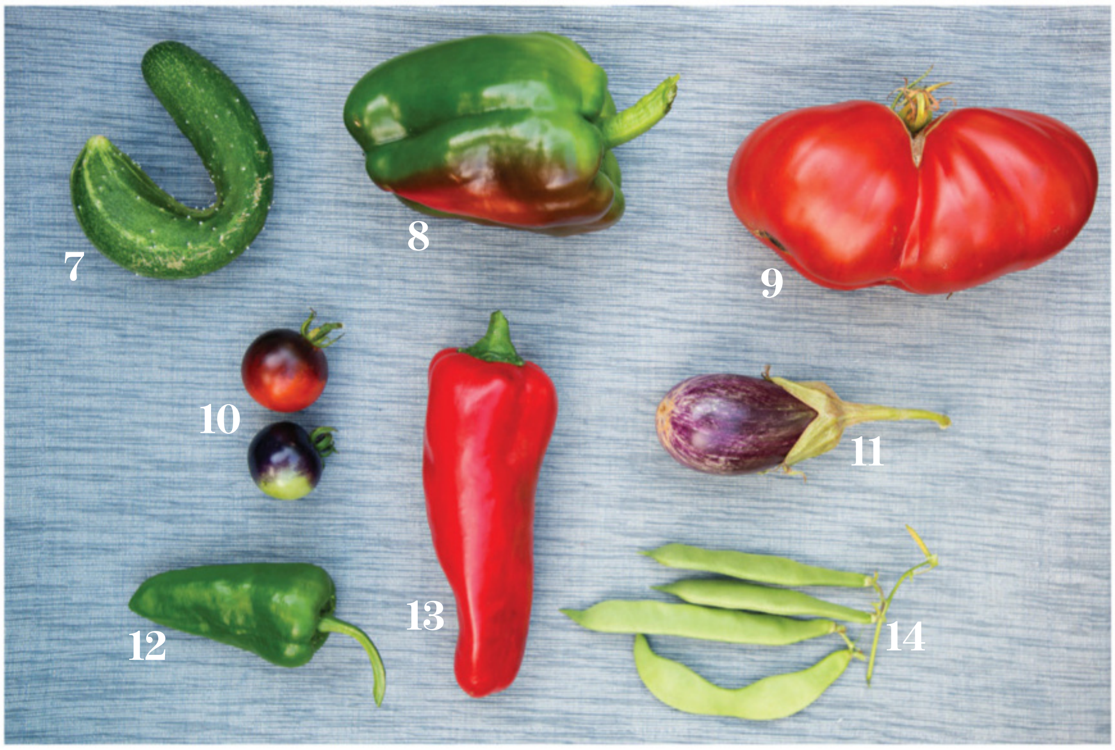
OPPOSITE In the east-facing garden section, 'Spigariello' broccoli raab, lacinato kale, and chicory produce their greens beside a chair and small table. Fond of terra-cotta rather than plastic, Michele learned that large containers are critical. Each plant gets its own individual pot so the roots don't compete with each other. **ABOVE** Not a fan of wasting—and because she grows her food organically—Michele eats this 'Nagami' kumquat (*Fortunella margarita* 'Nagami') flesh and all. **BELOW** The Barbados cherry *(Malpighia glabra)* has a sweet-and-sour taste and is high in vitamin C. This pot—along with the kumquat, sweet bay, citrus, and anything else that can't withstand Boston winters—gets hauled indoors when the weather becomes too cold.

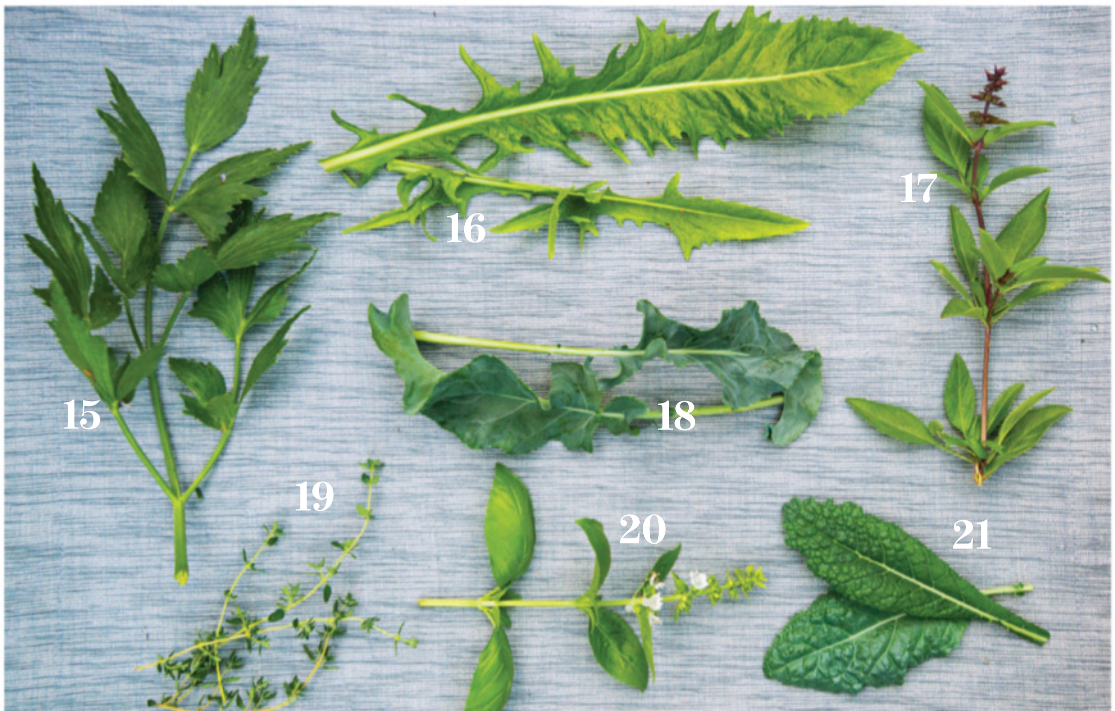


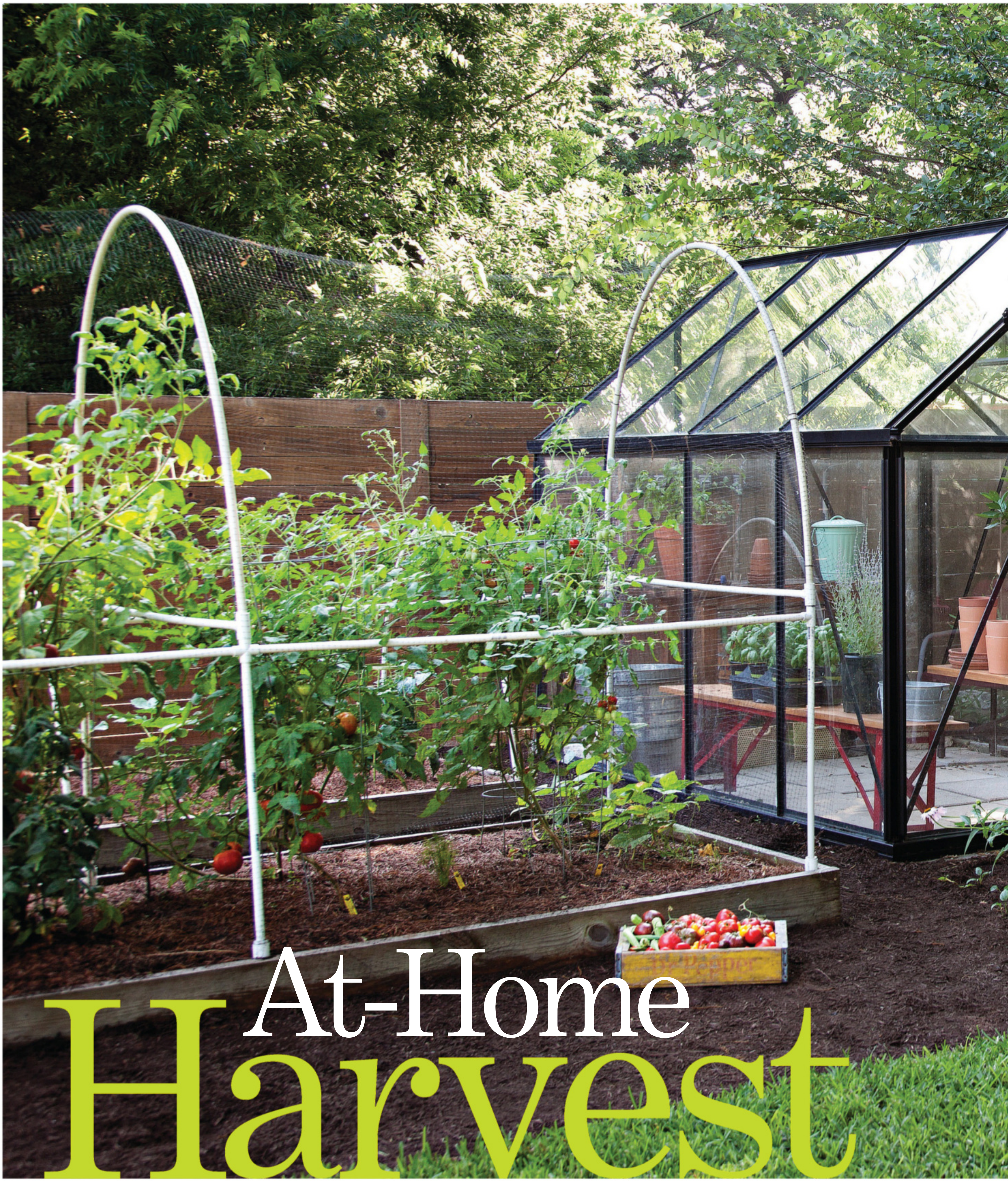
ROOFTOP HARVEST

Not much bigger than a kitchen and five stories in the air, this mini farm pumps out the produce. Michele Topor makes her garden work hard, supplying citrus, herbs, berries, vegetables, and greens. Take a look at some highlights from her homestead aloft:

1. Barbados cherry *(Malpighia glabra)*
2. Lime 'Kefir'
3. Citron 'Etrog'
4. Sweet bay *(Laurus nobilis)*
5. Strawberry 'Mara des Bois'
6. Kumquat 'Nagami'
7. English cucumber
8. Pepper 'Big Bertha'
9. Pomodoro tomato 'Red Pear'
10. Tomato 'Indigo Rose'
11. Eggplant 'Rosa Bianca'
12. Pepper 'Padron'
13. Red pepper 'Carmen'
14. Rampicante pole bean 'Super Marconi'
15. Lovage
16. Chicory
17. Thai basil
18. Broccoli raab 'Spigariello'
19. English thyme
20. Basil 'Genovese'
21. Lacinato kale



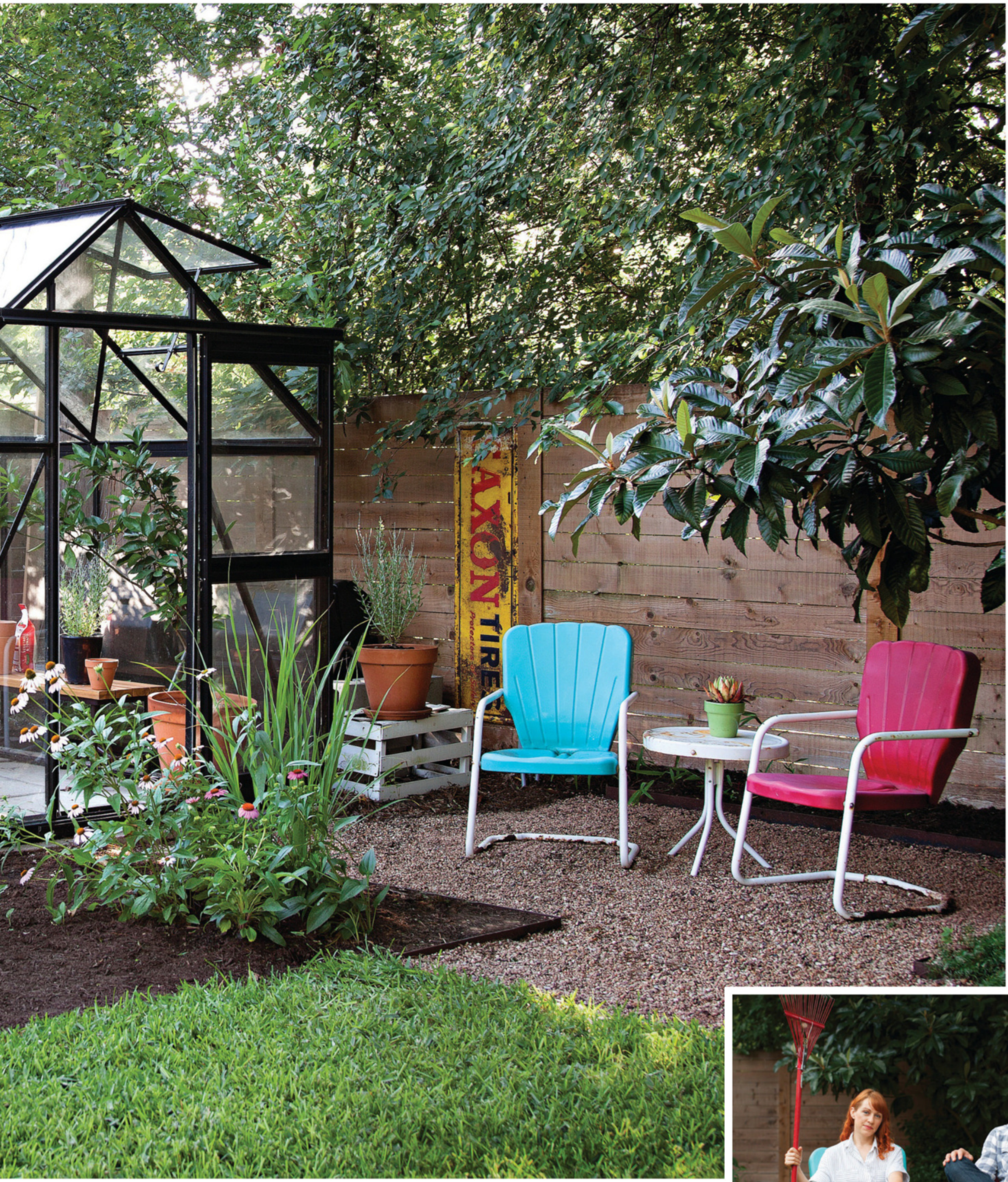




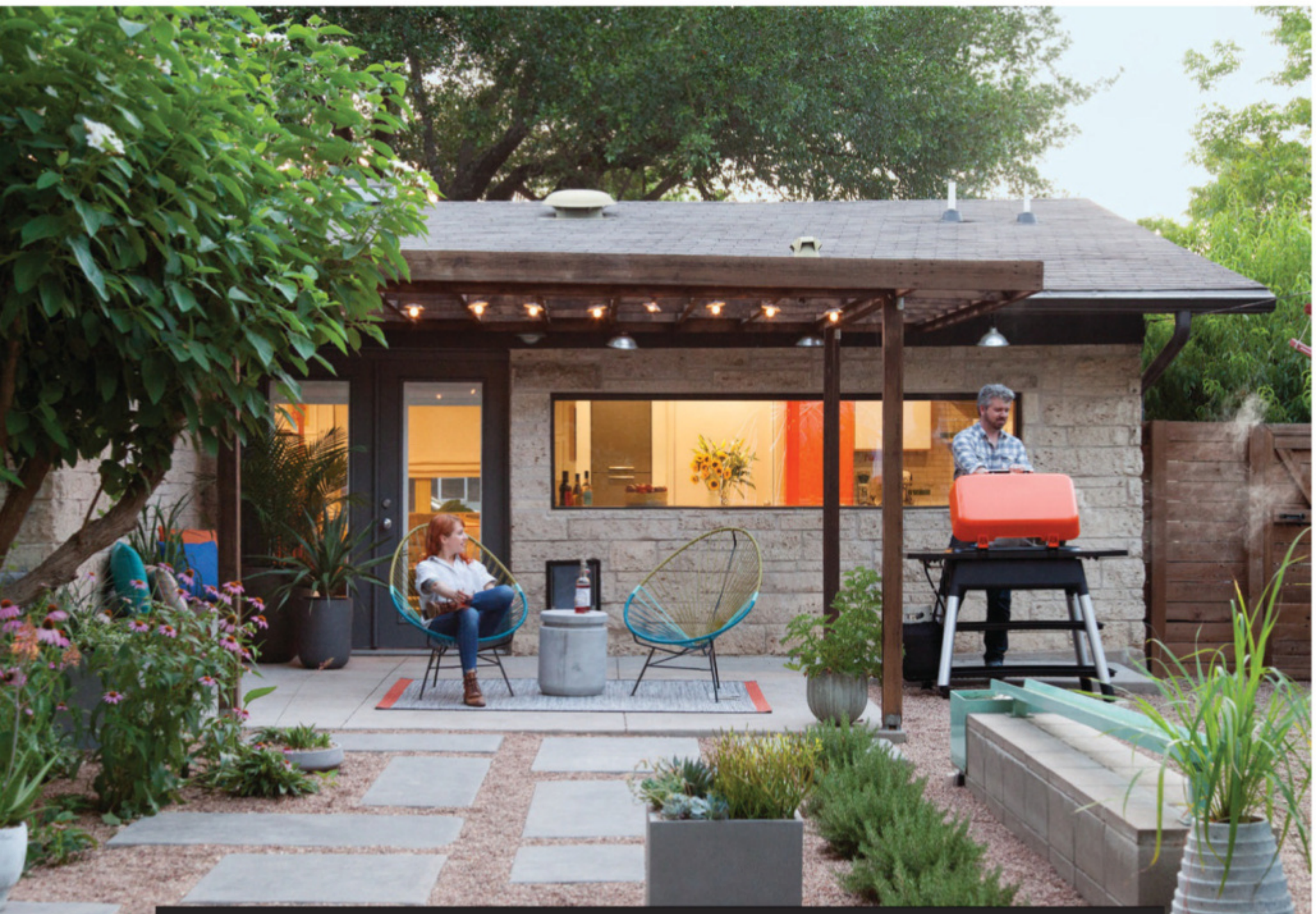
At-Home Harvest

Chickens, citrus, and eco-consciousness thrive in an Austin couple's reimagined urban yard.

writer PAM PENICK *photographer* RYANN FORD



ABOVE A 7×10-foot greenhouse allows Robin Finlay and Adam Voorhes to overwinter basil, start tomatoes early, and protect their potted citrus trees from hard freezes. Colorful motel chairs, an old sign on the fence, and potted plants create an inviting focal point and resting place next to the vegetable garden. **RIGHT** The couple have turned their backyard into an urban homestead, creating a landscape that provides food for the table and nurtures their honeybees and small flock of Barred Plymouth Rock hens.



GARDEN AT A GLANCE

¼-ACRE LOT • AUSTIN, TEXAS • ZONE 9A

THE DESIGN

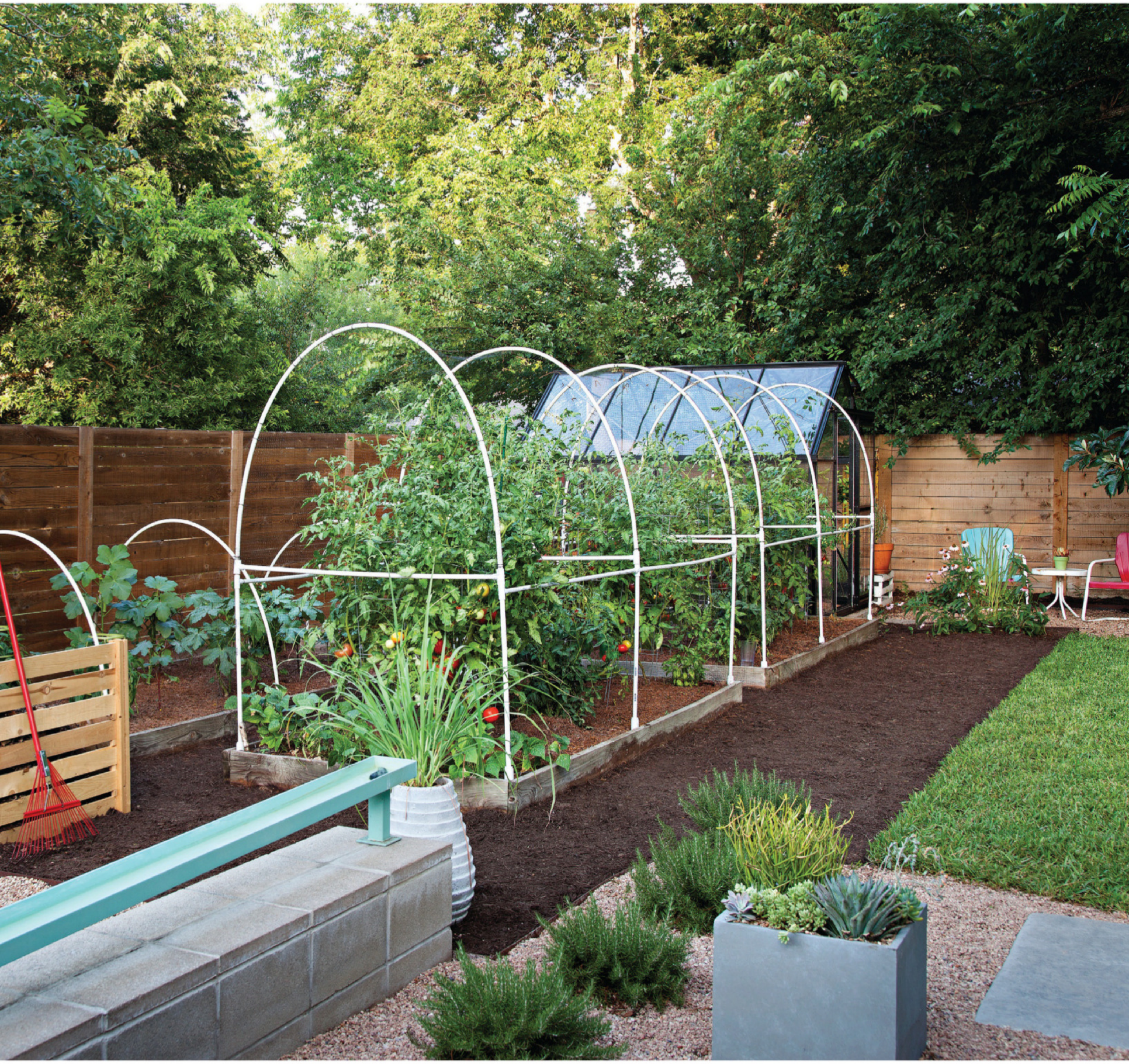
"If we can't eat it, we don't really want it," Robin Finlay says. "Our garden is about utility." Robin and her husband, Adam Voorhes, have made their compact urban backyard in Austin surprisingly hardworking. They keep chickens for a daily supply of eggs; tend a beehive for honey; grow loads of citrus, tomatoes, okra, and herbs for cooking; and collect rainwater for watering—all while enjoying a clean-lined modern style that suits their updated 1960s ranch home.

When they moved in, a patchy lawn offered little more than room for their bulldogs, Lefty and Lucy, to romp. Eager to make their yard more functional, the couple hired a landscape designer to carve out zones along the perimeter for growing food, tending the chicken coop and beehive, and cooking on the patio. A straight-edged pea-gravel path wraps around the yard, connecting the working spaces and patio and neatly framing the downsized lawn, which is still roomy enough for pup playtime.

THE PLANTS

Thanks to Austin's mild winters, the garden provides something to eat year-round. Tomatoes get planted in March, right after the final freeze. However, the real battle isn't cold weather but hungry squirrels and birds, so the couple built arches of PVC pipe and bird netting over their crop. "That became the worst idea ever," Robin says. "We got so many tomatoes that we couldn't keep up with them," Adam says. "We made 30 pounds of tomatoes into sauce. We gave tomatoes away. It was insanity!"

In the fall they plant lettuce, chard, broccoli, and cauliflower, and in winter potted lemons, limes, and grapefruits produce a bounty of fruit (a greenhouse protects them from the occasional freeze) and hardy herbs such as rosemary can be snipped to flavor dinner. Robin and Adam spend a lot more time in their yard now, and it has doubled their living space. "Our yard is the largest room of our house," Robin says. "When we have friends over, everyone gravitates outside."



OPPOSITE Adam grills dinner outside most nights in summer. Robin keeps him company on their arbor-shaded patio, where a pair of retro Acapulco chairs overlook the backyard and steel fountain. **ABOVE** Bent PVC piping and bird netting—“our tomato cathedral,” Robin calls it—protect ripening tomatoes from hungry birds and thirsty squirrels, resulting in a much greater harvest. **RIGHT** A galvanized-steel tank, one of two in the garden, can hold up to 1,000 gallons of rainwater collected from the roof. A gutter and downspout funnel runoff into the tank, and a small utility pump aids gravity in moving the water into hoses for irrigating the garden. Some years the tanks provide enough water to last all summer, saving the couple the cost of city water.

ABOVE LEFT Protected by his bee suit and holding a smoker to calm the bees, Adam pulls a frame from the hive to see if the winged insects have capped their honey. Once capped, the honey is ready to extract and jar. **ABOVE RIGHT** Robin holds a bowl of fresh eggs gathered from the backyard chicken coop. **OPPOSITE** Adam's small flock of hens roosts in a stylish chicken coop the couple built and painted to match the trim colors of their house. With supervision, the hens are allowed to roam around the garden and pea-gravel paths, cleaning up any bugs they find.

HOW TO SET UP A BACKYARD FARM

Check your city and homeowners association rules before committing to chickens or bees, then follow Adam Voorhes and Robin Finlay's advice for setting up your urban or suburban stead.

PICK THE RIGHT LOCATION

Chicken coops and bee hives generally must be located a certain distance from your home and neighboring homes, so check the rules and measure before building a henhouse or hive.

AVOID PESTICIDES

Bees are sensitive to chemicals, and if you (or your neighbor) use them to kill pests, they can destroy the hive. Instead use organic mosquito dunks in ponds or rain barrels, and eliminate standing water. Talk with neighbors about not spraying or doing it in the evening when bees are back in the hive. Share your honey harvest as an incentive!

PLANT FOR POLLINATORS

Bees will travel miles to collect pollen and nectar. Make it easy for them by planting pollinator-friendly plants in your yard such as purple coneflower, aster, bee balm, and rosemary. Bees will also pollinate citrus trees, which is essential for fruit production.

PROVIDE A WATER SOURCE

Bees get thirsty, and when it's really hot, they carry water back to the hive to help cool it. Set up a bee-friendly fountain or container pond so they don't congregate at your neighbor's birdbath or your dog's water dish; place it at least 20 feet away from the hive.

GUARD AGAINST PREDATORS

"Keeping chickens is about paying attention," Robin says. "Look for holes in the coop, and watch over hens if you let them out." Hawks, foxes, raccoons, snakes, and rats can all wreak havoc on your flock or its eggs. Build a secure coop, quickly repair holes, and protect free-ranging birds.

GROW YOUR OWN FOOD

Less watering, fewer weeds, easier plant maintenance: Construct a raised bed for your backyard.

5 BEST VEGGIES TO GROW IN A BED

- LEAFY GREENS
- TOMATOES
- CARROTS
- BEANS
- ONIONS

HOW TO BUILD A RAISED BED

MATERIALS

- 1×4-inch cedar board, 10 feet
- 1×4-inch cedar board, 6 feet
- 1×4-inch cedar board, 8 feet
- ¼×1-inch cedar slat, 4 feet
- 2-inch corrugated galvanized metal roofing material, 2×8-foot sheet
- Offset metal snips
- Wood stain
- 3-inch paintbrush
- 8 corner brackets
- Box of 50 self-piercing hex screws with neoprene washers, #10 × 1-inch
- ¼-inch magnetic hex screwdriver or drill bit

INSTRUCTIONS

① **CUT THE CEDAR** Cut the 10-foot cedar board in half for the two longer top pieces. Cut the 6-foot cedar board in half for the two shorter top pieces. Cut the 8-foot cedar board into eight 1-foot lengths for the leg pieces. Cut the 4-foot cedar slat into four 1-foot lengths for the inside support pieces (a). (TIP: If you don't have the proper tools, you can ask the lumber or home improvement store to cut it for you.)

② **CUT THE METAL** Use metal snips to cut the corrugated roofing metal in half lengthwise, making two 1×8-foot panels (b). Next, cut both panels at the 3-foot mark to form the ends of the raised bed. The remaining two 1×5-foot panels will form the sides.

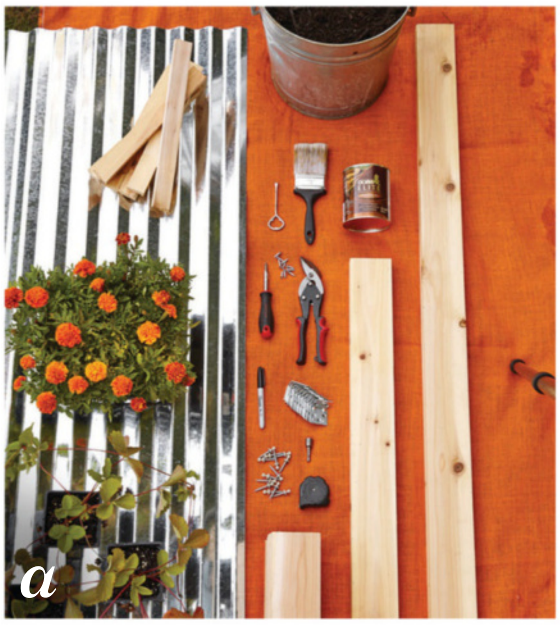
③ **STAIN THE CUT BOARDS** Use a paintbrush to apply stain (c).

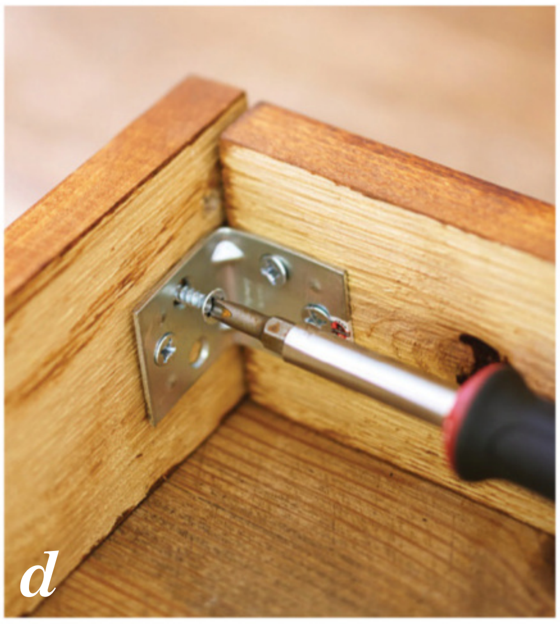
④ **CONNECT THE TOP PIECES** Attach the four wood top pieces using corner brackets (d). Use two screws on each board end to keep it stable. You'll have a 3×5-foot frame.

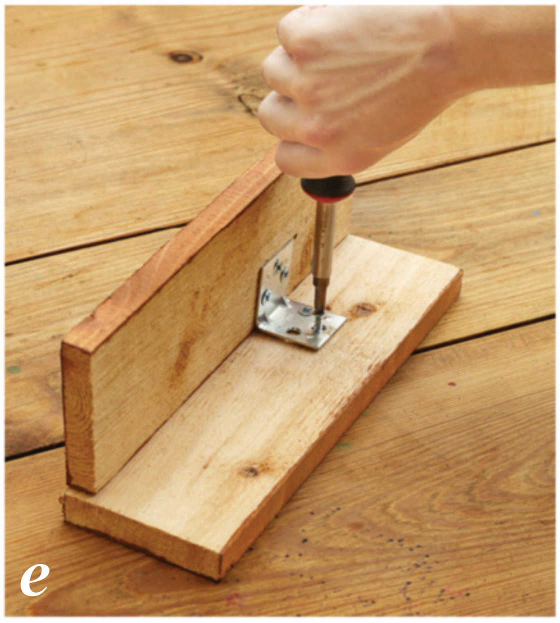
⑤ **BUILD THE LEGS** Connect two 1-foot boards with corner brackets using two screws on each board (e). These will support the 3×5-foot frame and serve as footings for the raised bed.

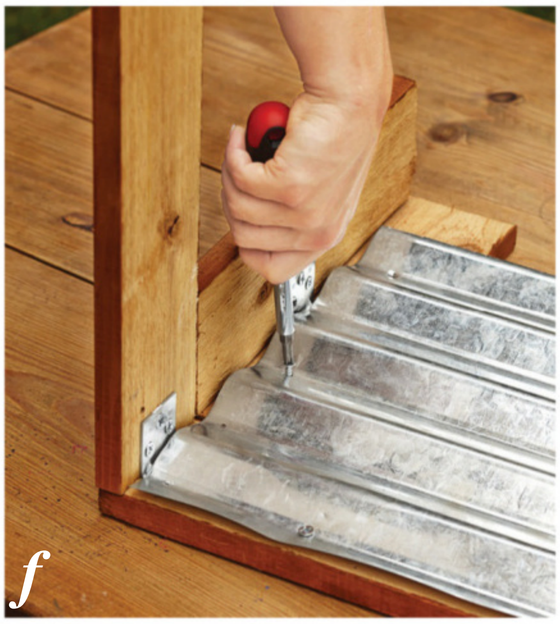
⑥ **SCREW IN THE METAL SIDE** Position legs at both ends of the box frame, then lay the metal side in the section with the cut metal edge facing the bottom of the box. Screw along the inside of the sides and legs to connect these three sections (f). Repeat to complete all four sides.

⑦ **PLACE THE RAISED BED** From the inside, secure a 1-foot slat vertically at the midpoint of each side to increase the stability of the metal (g). Firmly press the legs slightly into the ground, *opposite*. You may need to loosen the soil to sink the legs into hard ground.









SIZE GUIDE

Narrower is better for raised beds. If you can access the bed from all sides, make it no more than 4 feet across. If the raised bed is pushed up against a yard edge or wall, limit the size to 2 feet across. If you're placing raised beds side by side, leave a pathway between them big enough for a lawn mower or wheelbarrow.

5
4
MARTIN SUCHIK
U.S. MAIL

PLANT AROUND A MAILBOX

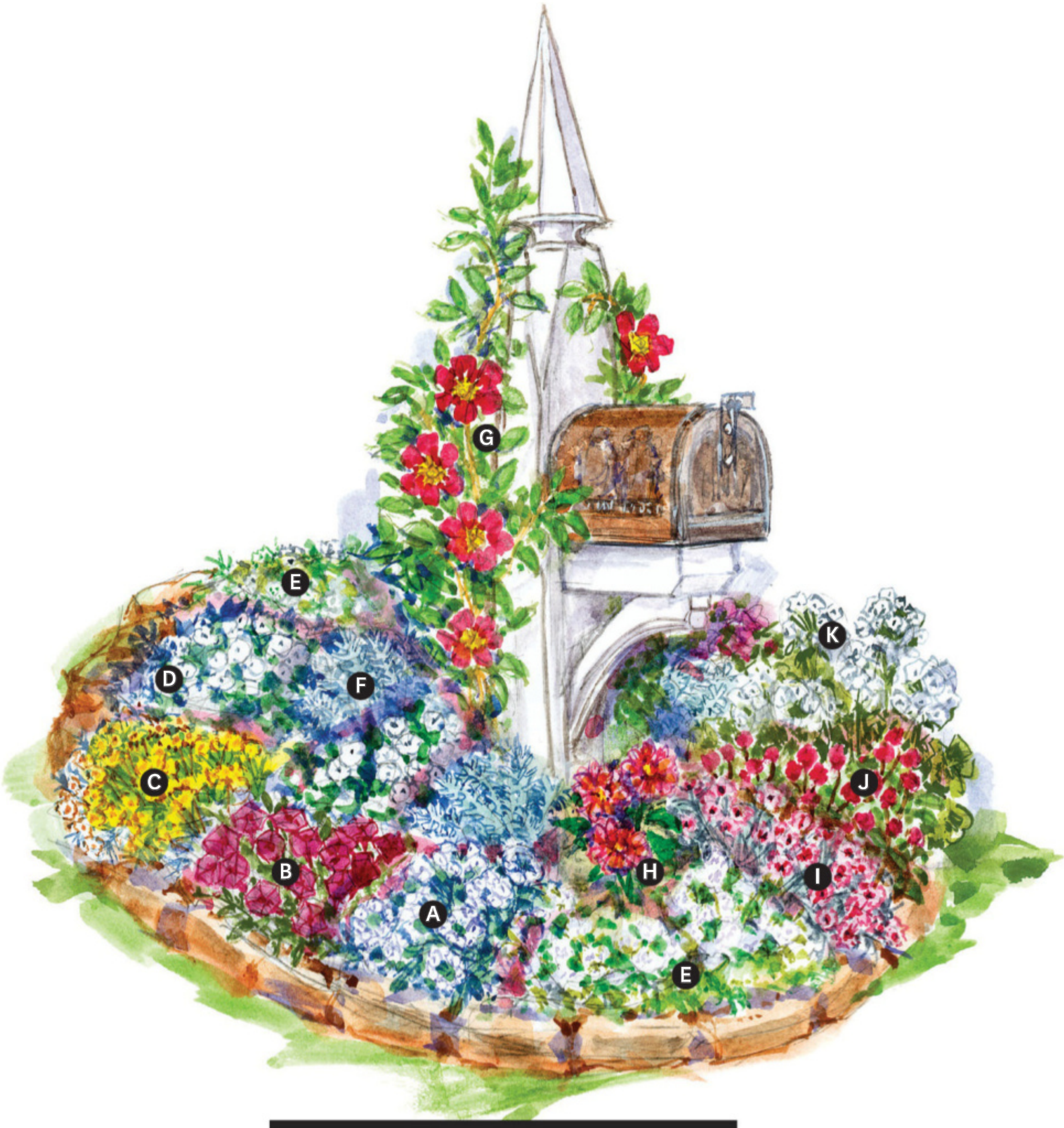
Start small in your gardening endeavors by picking a tiny plot of land to sow some color. This pocket garden creates curb appeal and adapts easily to surround a lamppost or flagpole. When designing a garden for a street-level mailbox, consider the special growing conditions of the curbside location.

① **LOWER WATER NEEDS** Choose drought-tolerant beauties to pull off a great display without a lot of pampering. Unless your hose easily reaches the curb, you will need to carry water to the street to give plants a drink.

② **FOLIAGE COUNTS** Aim for a mix of plants with colorful leaves and flowers. Curb gardens need continuity, and attractive foliage fuels a constant color show.

③ **THINK BIG** Arrange plants in blocks of color to give the garden strong appeal that's easily visible from passing cars. Or, if the only viewers who will see the garden are the mail carrier, your family, and passing pedestrians, plant as intricate a design as you like.

④ **LOWER SOIL** As you build your bed, avoid raising the soil level above the surrounding grade so you don't risk having mulch or soil wash onto nearby lawn or the street during downpours. As you amend the soil prior to planting, it will rise above surrounding surfaces, so relocate some of the extra soil to another spot in the yard. You can also rely on a raised edge, like the bricks in this garden, to contain things. But even with edging, it's best for the soil to be level with the grade.



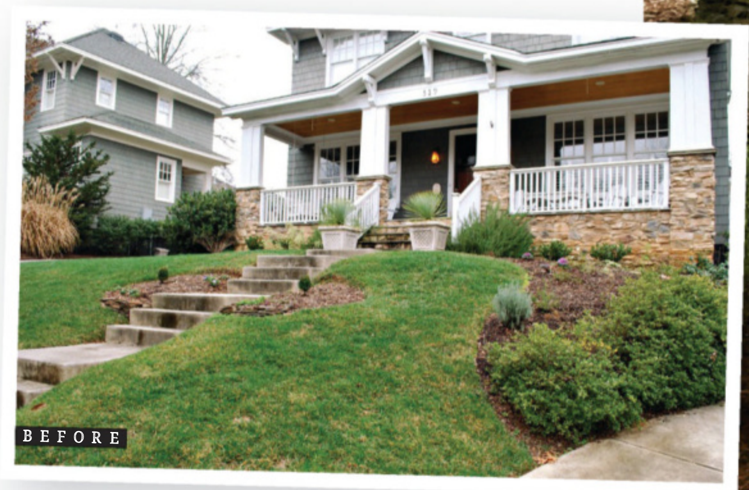
PLANT LIST

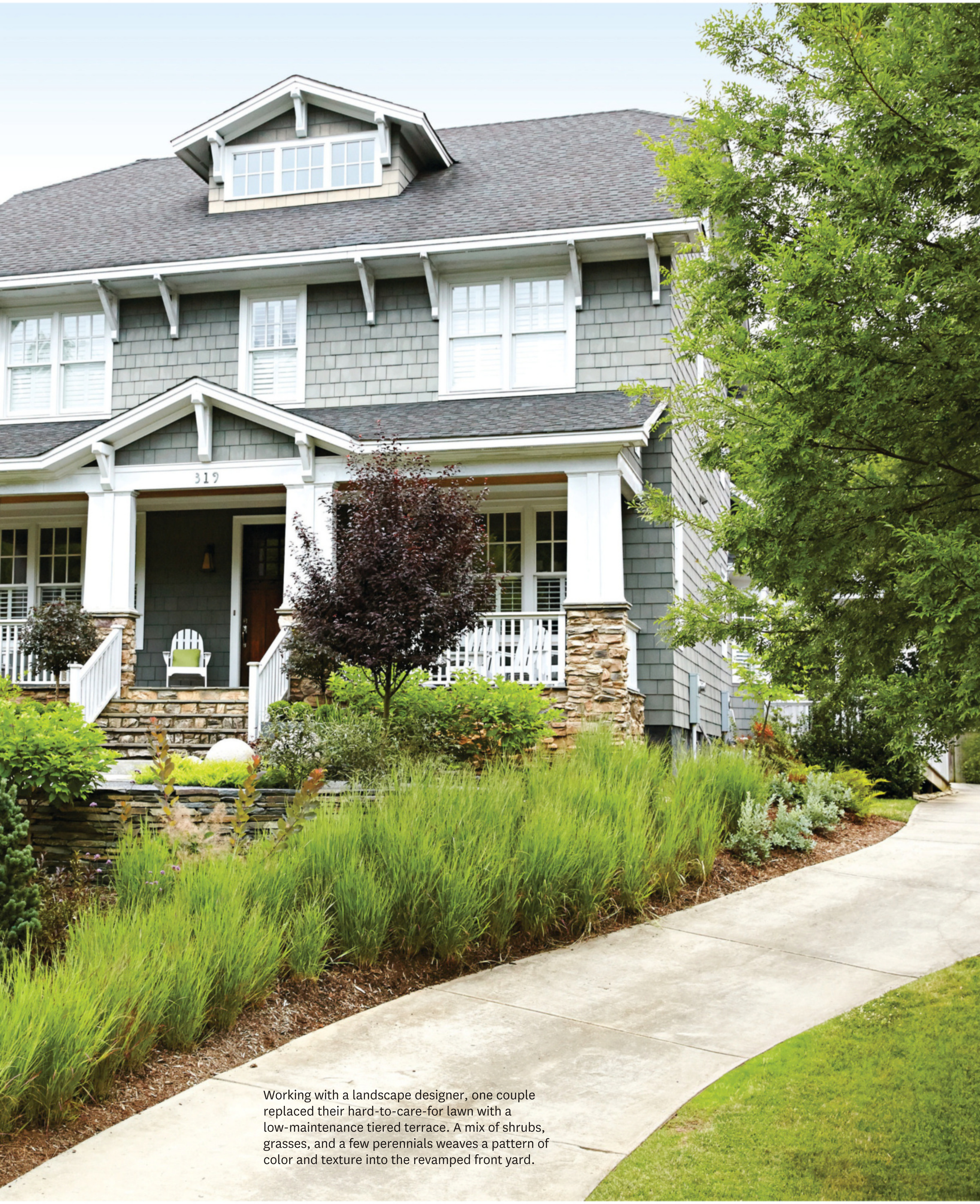
- **A.** Verbena (*Verbena* × *hybrida*)
- **B.** Purple Wave petunias
- **C.** Dahlberg daisy *(Dyssodia tenuiloba)*
- **D.** Impatiens *(Impatiens walleriana)*
- **E.** Sweet alyssum *(Lobularia maritima)*
- **F.** Dusty miller *(Senecio cineraria)*
- **G.** Clematis (*Clematis* spp.)
- **H.** Dahlia (*Dahlia* × *hybrida*)
- **I.** China pinks *(Dianthus chinensis)*
- **J.** Gomphrena *(Gomphrena globosa)*
- **K.** Zonal geranium (*Pelargonium* × *hortorum*)

PORCHSIDE GATHERING

A transformed front yard, inspired by Cape Cod and contemporary art, promotes impromptu neighborhood get-togethers and formal events.

writer HELEN YOEST
photographer BRIE WILLIAMS
producer ANDREA NORDSTROM CAUGHEY





Working with a landscape designer, one couple replaced their hard-to-care-for lawn with a low-maintenance tiered terrace. A mix of shrubs, grasses, and a few perennials weaves a pattern of color and texture into the revamped front yard.

GARDEN AT A GLANCE

35×50-FOOT FRONT YARD • CHARLOTTE, NORTH CAROLINA • ZONE 7B

THE DESIGN

A North Carolina couple wanted to tame their severely sloped property, which required a lot of care and rendered their yard unusable for hosting—a staple in their mature, friendly neighborhood—so they called in landscape architect Jay Sifford to make it happen. “We first reconfigured the sidewalk slightly by removing a step and elongating the uppermost run, adding a pseudo-mirrored terrace on either side,” he says.

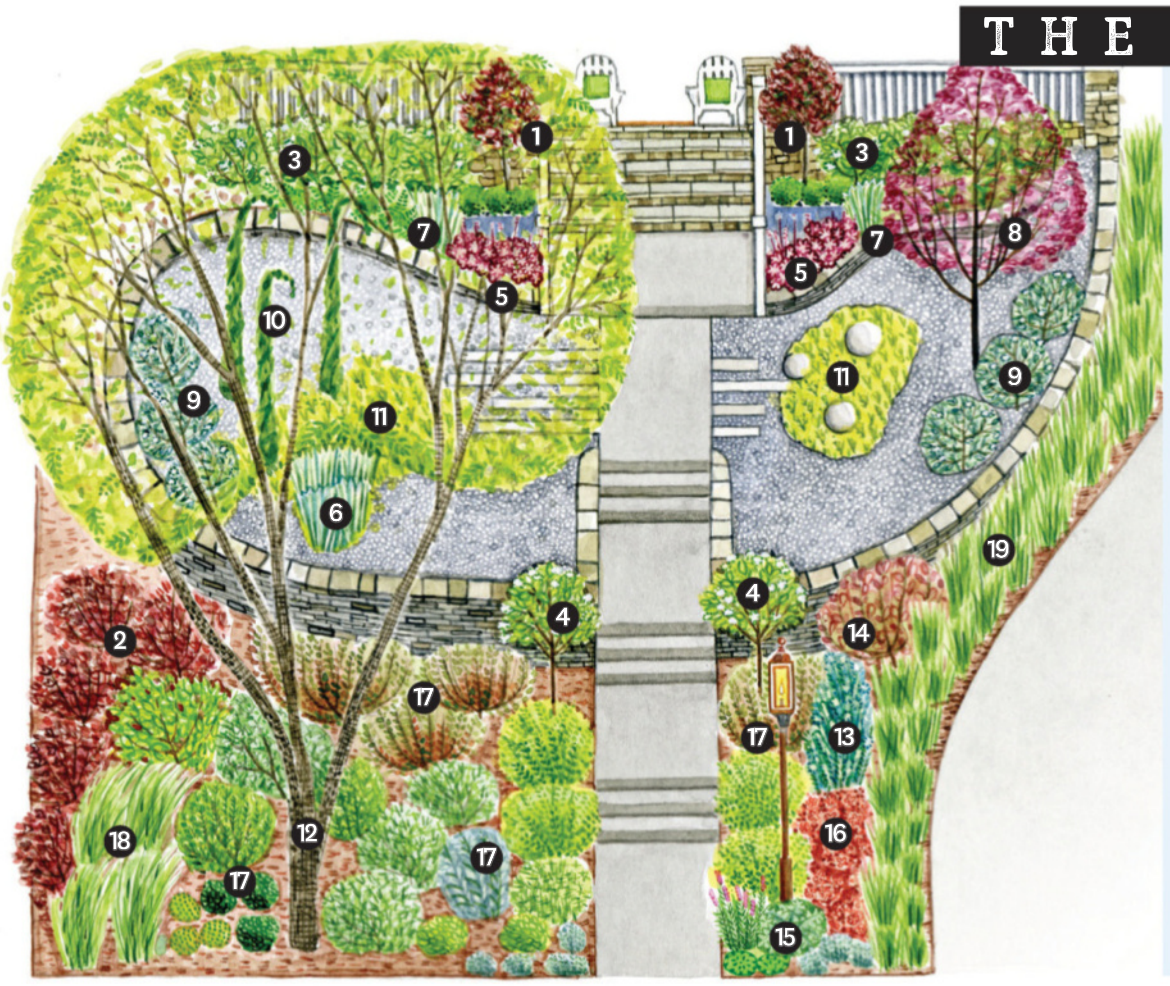
To create a defined sense of separation between the upper terrace and lower yard, Sifford’s team built a mortared stone retaining wall and planted various shrubs. The house is tall and imposing from the street, so they installed bluestone planks horizontally off the central sidewalk axis to visually broaden the tight front yard. “We also cut the planks in random lengths to help move the eye; the textural contrast between the bluestone and the crushed screenings substrate is sublime,” Sifford says.

The couple’s front yard now blends with their home, requires little maintenance to suit their busy schedules, and offers a place to gather with friends and neighbors.

THE PLANTS

The homeowners took inspiration from childhood memories of New England landscapes: billowing white hydrangeas, junipers, iris, and boxwood. They also enjoy contemporary art, so when Sifford proposed a trio of carved granite spheres, the decision became clear: The spheres, placed on the right-hand side of the terrace, would counterbalance three sculptural *Chamaecyparis nootkatensis* ‘Van den Akker’ trees on the left.

For continuity, Sifford repeated other plant types in both formal and informal ways. Some choices were further updated for what could grow in the South, including new cultivars of old standbys. Hydrangeas act informally as a shrub skirting the foundation and as a formal tree in standards flanking the steps to the terrace. A similar example repeats with the Diablo ninebarks. To bring in the burgundy hue of the ninebarks, ‘Midnight Rose’ heuchera was paired with a ‘Thundercloud’ plum tree, accompanying the chartreuse ‘Golden Dream’ boxwood and the ‘All Gold’ shore junipers. A color palette of burgundy and chartreuse complements the gray stone wall and the crushed screenings on the terrace floor.



THE GARDEN PLAN

1. Tree-form Diablo ninebark

2. Shrub-form Diablo ninebark

3. Shrub-form ‘Phantom’ hydrangea

4. Tree-form ‘Phantom’ hydrangea

5. ‘Midnight Rose’ heuchera

6. Variegated Japanese iris

7. Japanese holly fern

8. ‘Thundercloud’ plum tree

9. Prague viburnums

10. *Chamaecyparis nootkatensis* (Alaskan cedar)

11. ‘All Gold’ shore juniper

12. Chinese elm

13. ‘Aoi’ Japanese white pine

14. ‘Grace’ smokebush

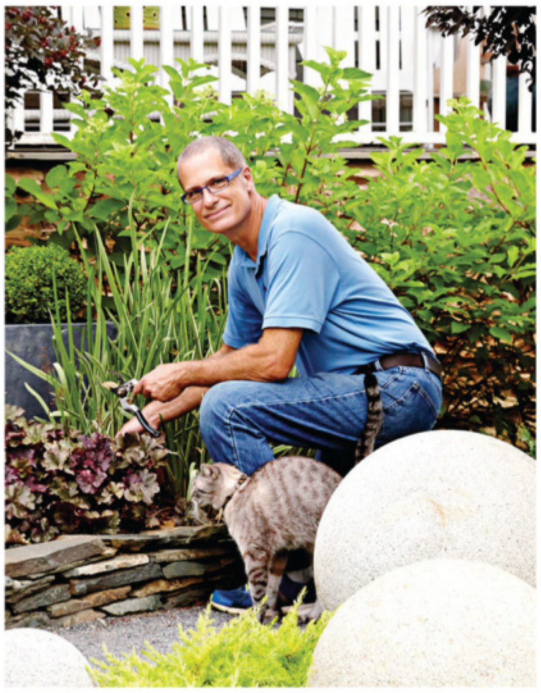
15. Honeybush

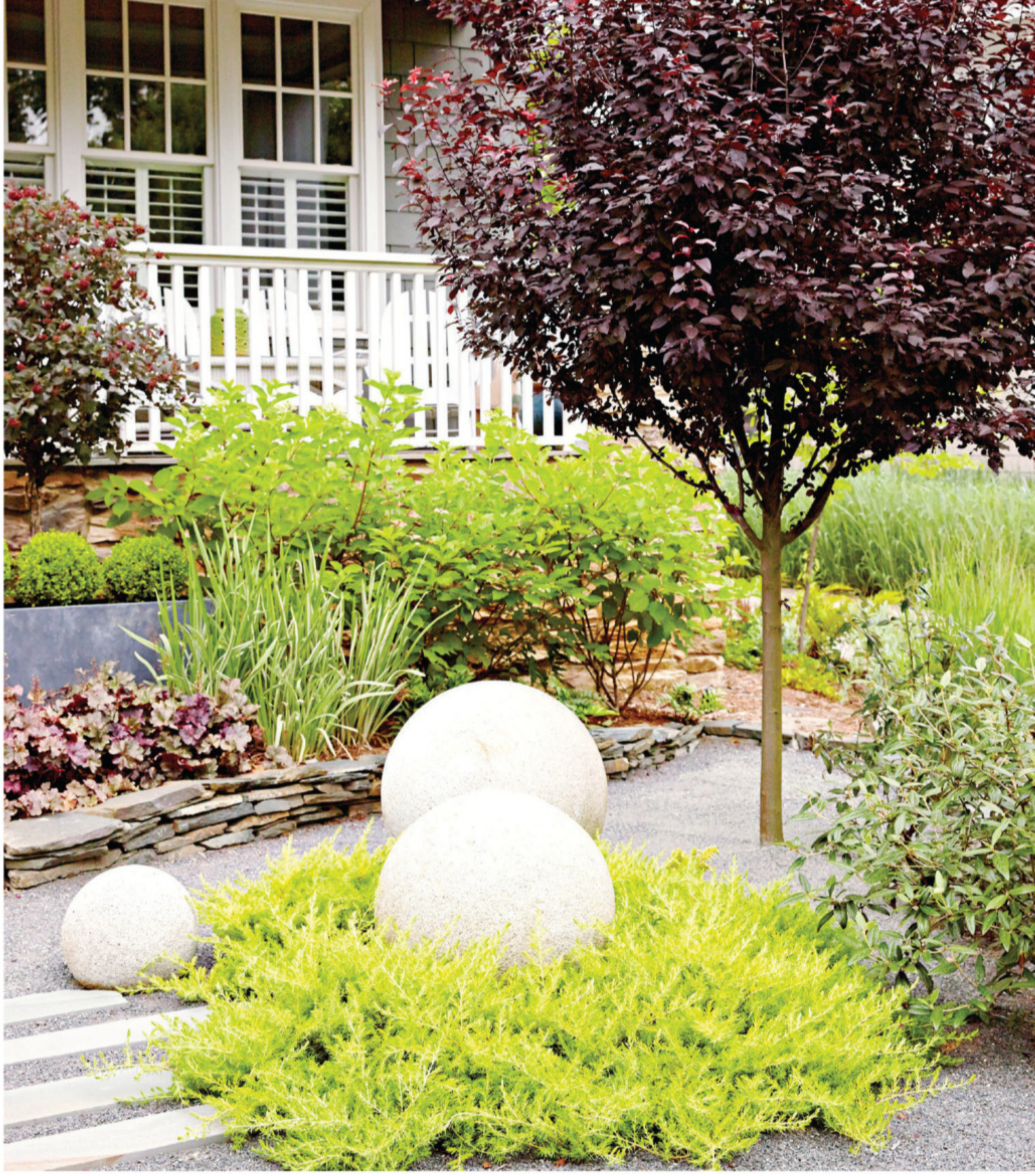
16. ‘Admiration’ barberry

17. Assorted shrubs

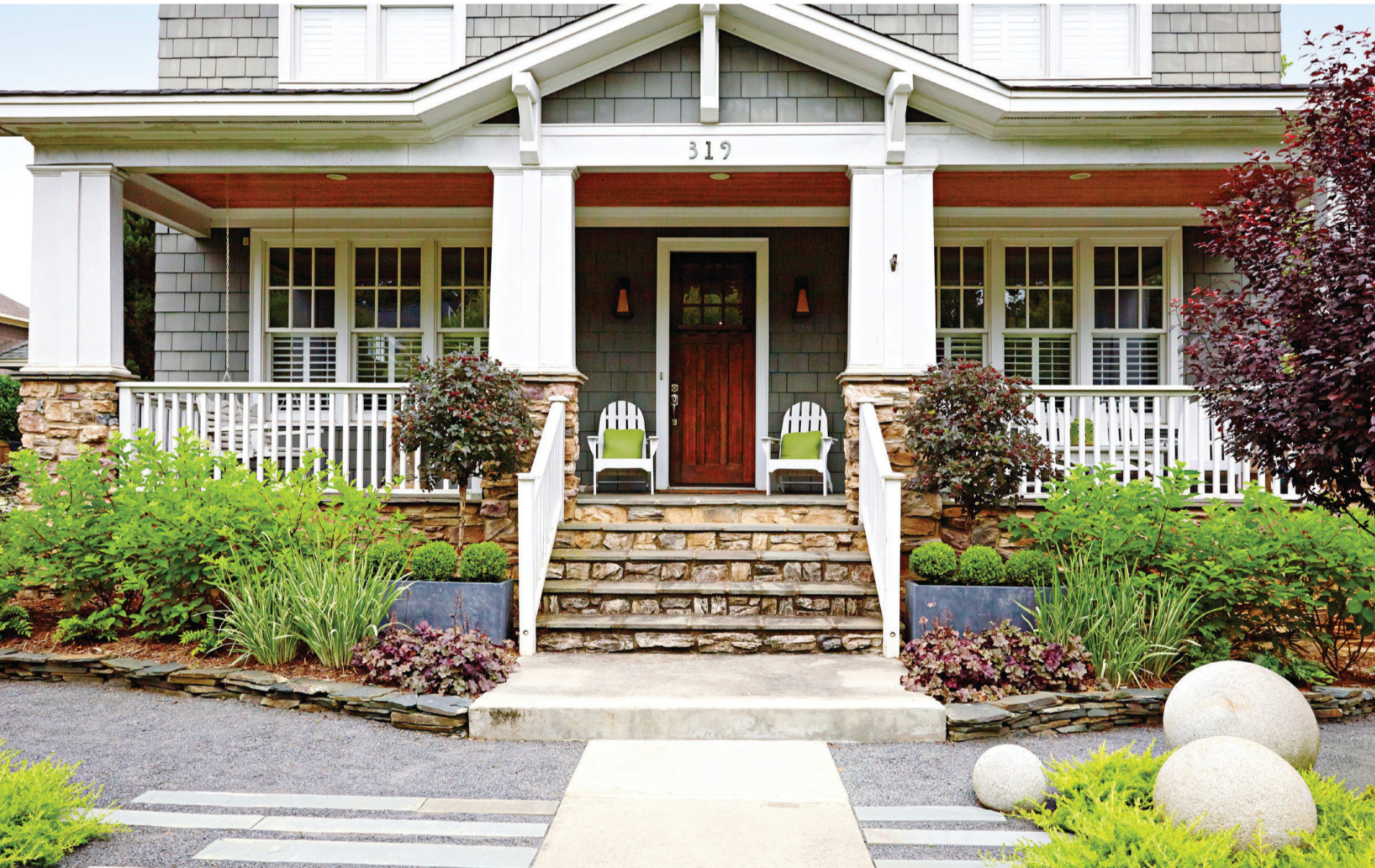
18. ‘Northwind’ panicum

19. ‘Shenandoah’ switchgrass





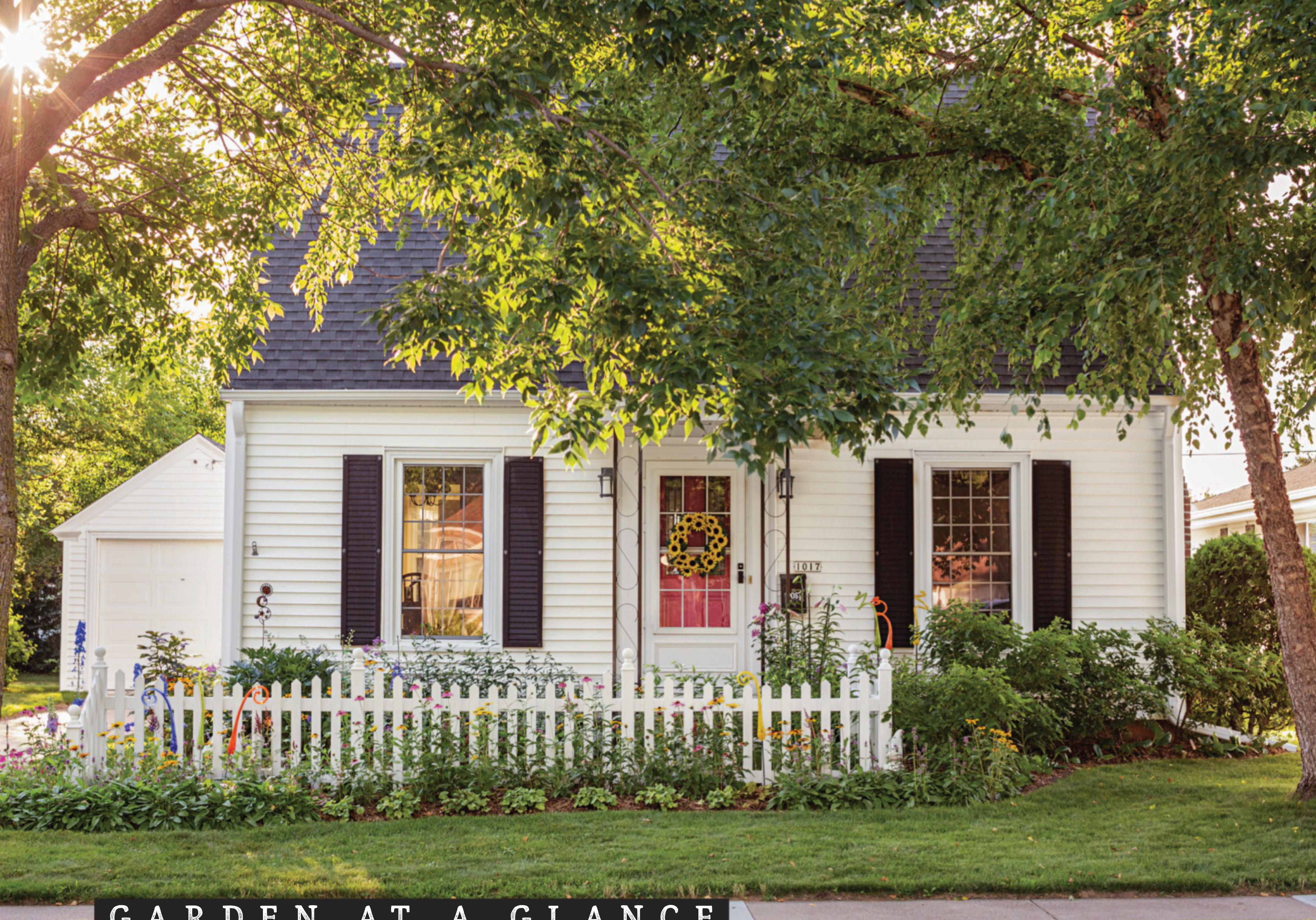
ABOVE Landscape architect Jay Sifford employed a burgundy and chartreuse color palette for this front garden. **RIGHT** The terrace features three varying-size granite spheres to serve as a focal point of contemporary art. The chartreuse color in the 'All Gold' shore juniper (*Juniperus conferta* 'All Gold') sets them off with stunning contrast. **BELOW** The journey to the front door welcomes guests by providing several places to pause and take in the views. Tree-form standards keep the eye moving around the space and provide continuity between upper and lower levels. On the upper level, tree-form Diablo ninebarks saddle the porch steps. Below the terrace, shrub-form ninebarks repeat the coloring in a less formal way.



Cottage Charm Revival

A well-placed picket fence, a redirected front path, and abundant flowerbeds turn a once mundane front yard into a warm and inviting retreat.

writer SAMANTHA S. THORPE
stylist NICK CROW
photographer BOB STEFKO



GARDEN AT A GLANCE

26×38-FOOT FRONT YARD • STEVENS POINT, WISCONSIN • ZONE 5A

THE DESIGN

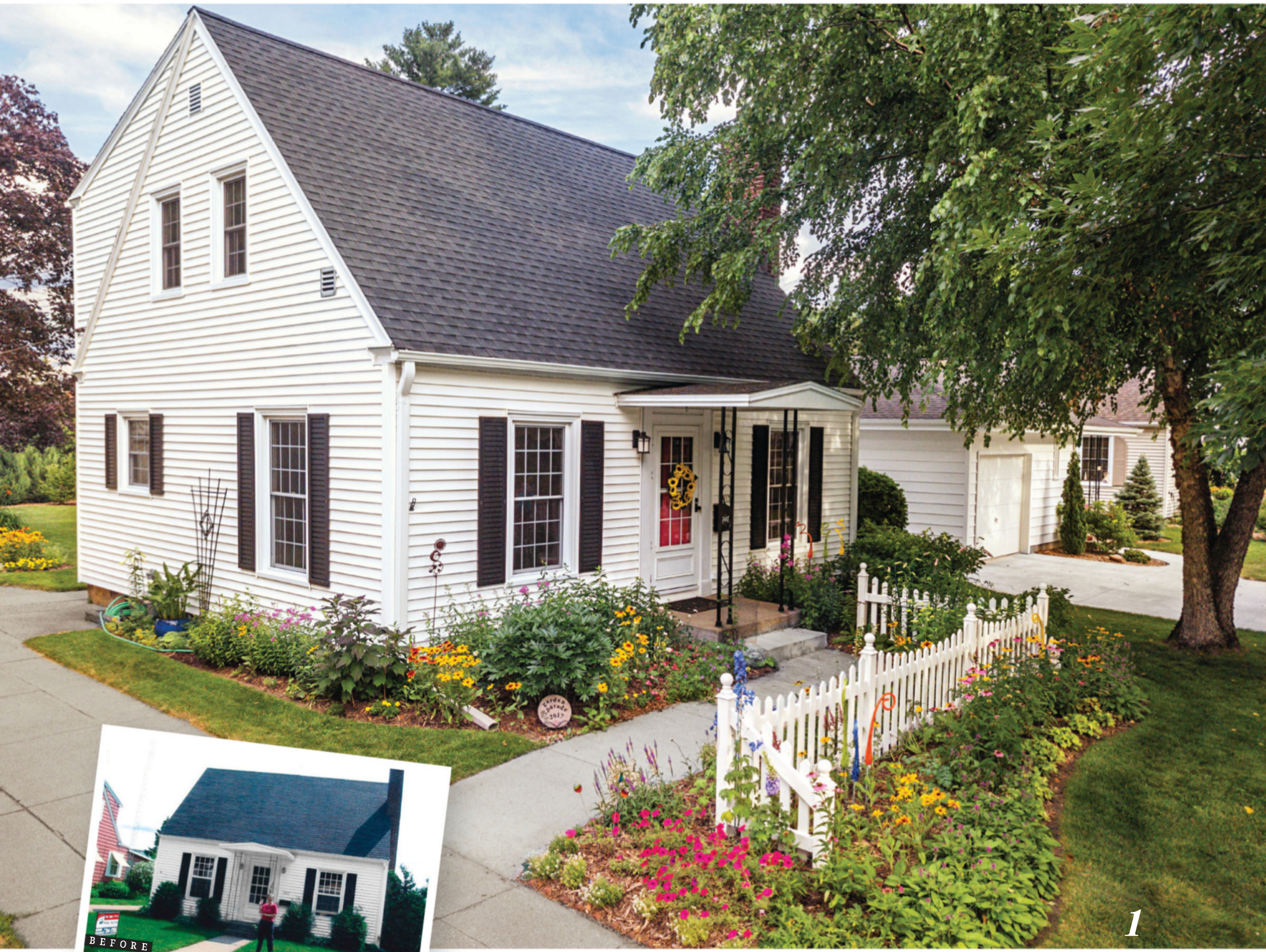
When Margaret Bau first bought her home, she could hardly wait to start gardening. But her 1940 Cape Cod came with a few visual obstacles that limited its charm: The steep roof dominated the facade, and the super-straight walkway that guided guests to the front door only accentuated the overhead pain point. A lone Norway maple hung over the garage, and a single circular flowerbed failed to add any oomph to the property. Margaret struggled with how to solve these issues until, one freezing January day, she went to the library to look for garden inspiration—and found a landscape plan that fit her house exactly. “The home had a prominent roof and it showed how adding an asymmetrical white picket fence connects the roofline to the yard, making the yard look bigger,” says Margaret, who contacted a contractor to pour a new path and a handyman to install a picket fence in the coming spring. She was ready to get to work.

THE PLANTS

The new hardscaping gave Margaret the framework to start planning her beds and borders. Trees came first: a serviceberry (*Amelanchier* spp.) and a crabapple take root in the backyard, while a river birch *(Betula nigra)* in front visually balances the roof. “My home is two stories and it looks very boxy and tall. Trees help visually anchor the house on this small lot,” she says. In 20 years, the trees have grown to aptly fill the space.

The beds—a palette of pink, white, and yellow blossoms with colorful garden art—soften the straight lines of the house and driveway. Margaret made a point to grow pollinator-friendly plants. *Rudbeckia hirta* ‘Prairie Sun’ freely self-seeds alongside white daisies, three kinds of bee balm (*Monarda* spp.), and Uproar Rose zinnia. Butterfly weed *(Asclepias tuberosa)* attracts monarch butterflies, and royal catchfly *(Silene regia)* entices hummingbirds. “Gardening feeds my soul and is immensely gratifying,” Margaret says.

ABOVE First-time homeowner Margaret Bau started with an overbearing roof, lots of lawn, and a need for a landscaping plan. A lucky discovery at the library provided the inspiration for a cottage retreat that attracts birds, bees, and butterflies. Every May, Margaret spreads finely ground hardwood mulch on top of all her beds. “It’s a ton of work to spread that huge mulch pile that gets dumped on my driveway, but it is well worth the effort since mulch suppresses weed germination, moderates soil temperature, and retains moisture,” Margaret says. “As the wood chips decompose over time, they add to the soil health.” **OPPOSITE** A handmade white picket fence with careful details adds charm and structure to Margaret’s yard.



1

2

1 Margaret tackled the hardscaping first. The walkway that ran straight from the door to the sidewalk was replaced with a path from the door to the driveway. Embracing the new path with a white picket fence and undulating flowerbeds helps soften the home's boxy architecture and bring out its charming character. *2* Originally, Margaret planned her color palette around white, pinks, and blues. But the golden *Rudbeckia hirta* 'Prairie Sun' is so prolific it became her signature plant. *3* Margaret's secret to a thriving garden? Aged manure from a relative's dairy farm. "Every time I plant anything, I dig a hole and fill it with generous scoops of cousin Kenny's cow manure," Margaret says. After placing a seedling or plant in the dug hole, she waters it well with liquid transplant booster and seaweed fertilizer mixed in water. *4* Butterfly weed *(Asclepias tuberosa)* is a staple in Margaret's garden. The nectar-rich flowers attract butterflies and bees.

3

START BUTTERFLY WEED FROM SEED

Butterfly weed (*Asclepias tuberosa*), a member of the milkweed family, brings many pollinators to Margaret's garden and it thrives in sandy, well-draining soil. "I bought some butterfly weed seed a few years ago and experimented with a technique called winter sowing. You take milk jugs, cut the top off and poke drainage holes in the base, plant the seeds in potting soil in the jug, tape them back up, and set them outside in a sunny spot from February on," Margaret says. "When danger of frost passed in spring, I carefully scooped the seedlings out with a teaspoon and planted 12 to 15 of them. Now I have a huge area of butterfly weed," she says. By regularly deadheading the plants and maintaining only the seedlings she wants, Margaret avoids letting butterfly weed take over the neighborhood.

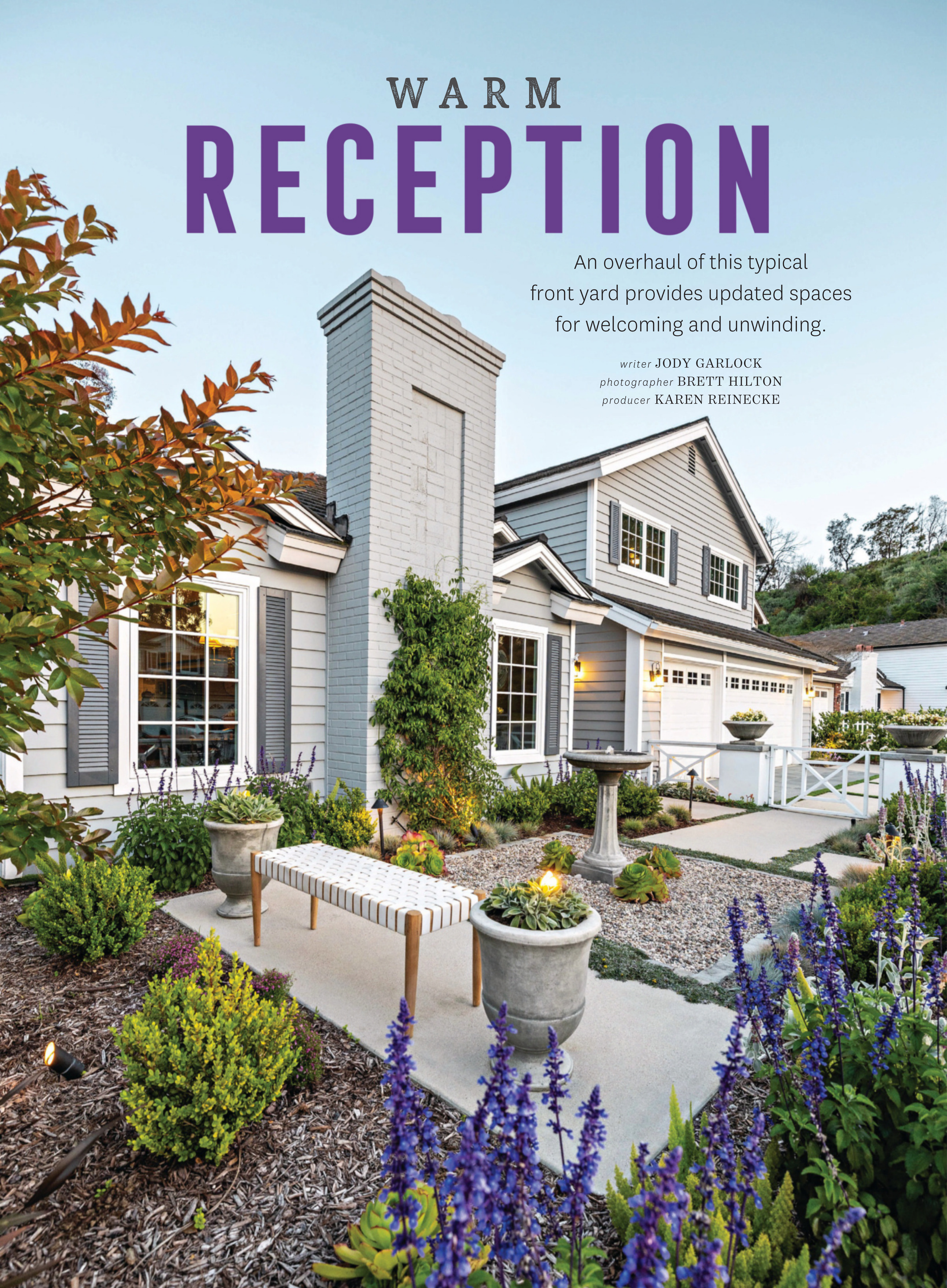
> "Gardening feeds my soul and is immensely gratifying."
>
> —HOMEOWNER MARGARET BAU

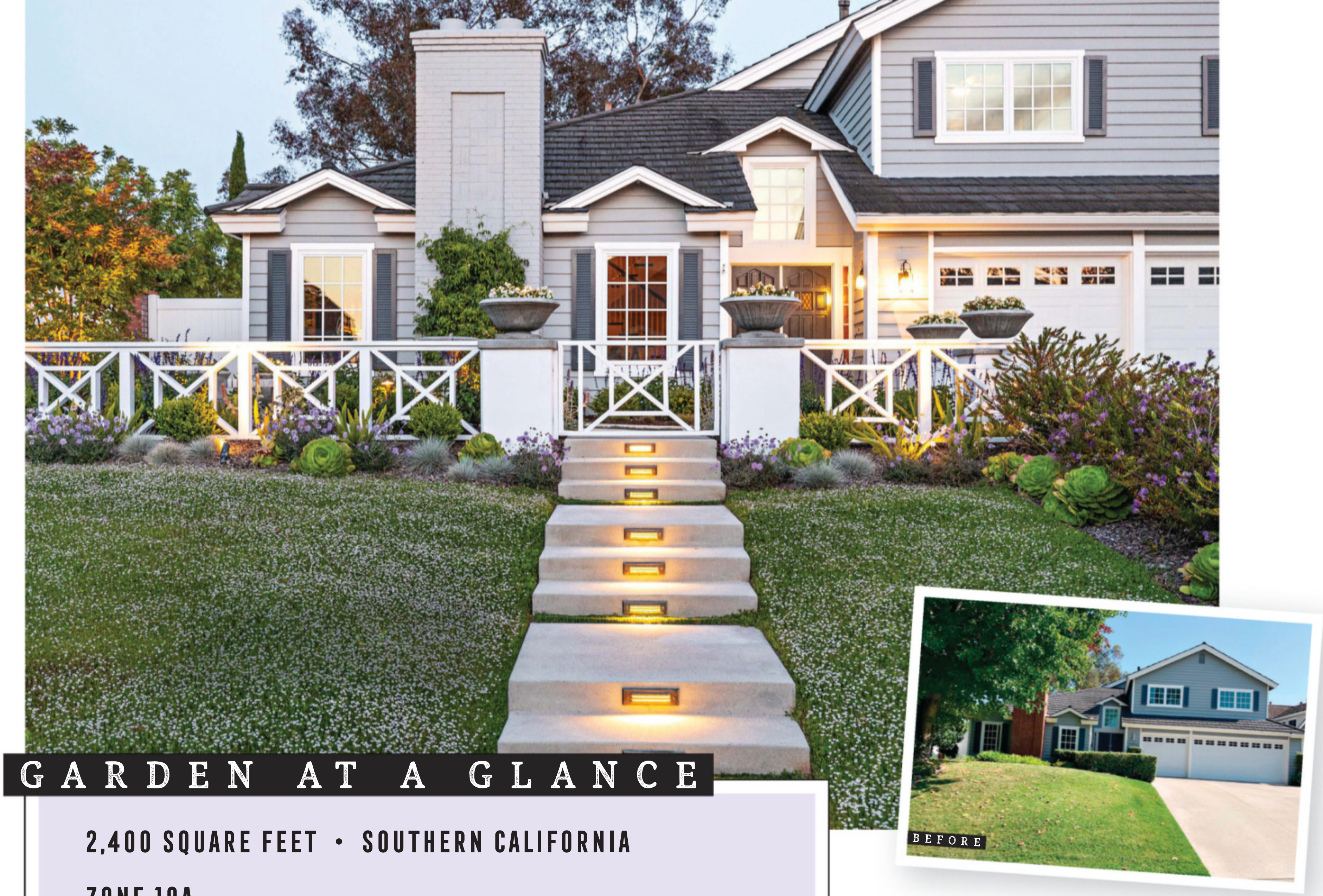
4

WARM
RECEPTION

An overhaul of this typical front yard provides updated spaces for welcoming and unwinding.

writer JODY GARLOCK
photographer BRETT HILTON
producer KAREN REINECKE




BEFORE

GARDEN AT A GLANCE

2,400 SQUARE FEET • SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

ZONE 10A

THE DESIGN

When Brad and Karen Baker transitioned to a new life stage—retirement—they yearned for a yard that offered pretty views, cozy seating, and the soothing trickle of water to enjoy with family and friends. Landscape designer Sacha McCrae of Living Gardens Landscape Design devised a plan that beautifully met the couple's desire for designated entertaining spots, less mowing, and an updated look that complements their Cape Cod-style home while weaving in her signature style. "The gardens I design are feminine and have a softness and movement to them," McCrae says. "There are so many special features, but every detail is subtle."

THE PLANTS

McCrae replaced the grass on the sloped front lawn with drought-tolerant Kurapia *(Lippia nodiflora)*, a groundcover that has small pink flowers in the spring and summer "and doesn't need mowing," she says. In front of the fence, McCrae planted *Aeonium urbicum* 'Salad Bowl', *Festuca* 'Elijah Blue', boxwood globes, and pincushion flowers *(Scabiosa)*. Inside the courtyard, *Dymondia* softens the edges of the pavers and a crape myrtle tree shades the bench. Lamb's-ear *(Stachys byzantina)*, *Salvia* 'Mystic Spires', *Phormium* 'Amazing Red', and *Asparagus densiflorus* 'Myers' fill the beds while *Pandorea jasminoides* 'Alba' vines climb the chimney. Some plantings need time to grow before the dramatic transformation will fully realize, but, McCrae says, "From day one I knew I wanted to create this special entry."

TOP Landscape designer Sacha McCrae defined the home's front entrance with LED-lit steps, short pillars at the gate, and a fence she designed that gives a glimpse of the courtyard beyond. "A true entry to the front door gives the home so much more curb appeal," she says. **BELOW** With a bistro table and soothing water sounds from a pedestal fountain, a formerly cramped and seldom-used side yard is now a serene place for the homeowners to enjoy morning coffee. "There's so much you can do, even with a small space, to make it special," McCrae says.

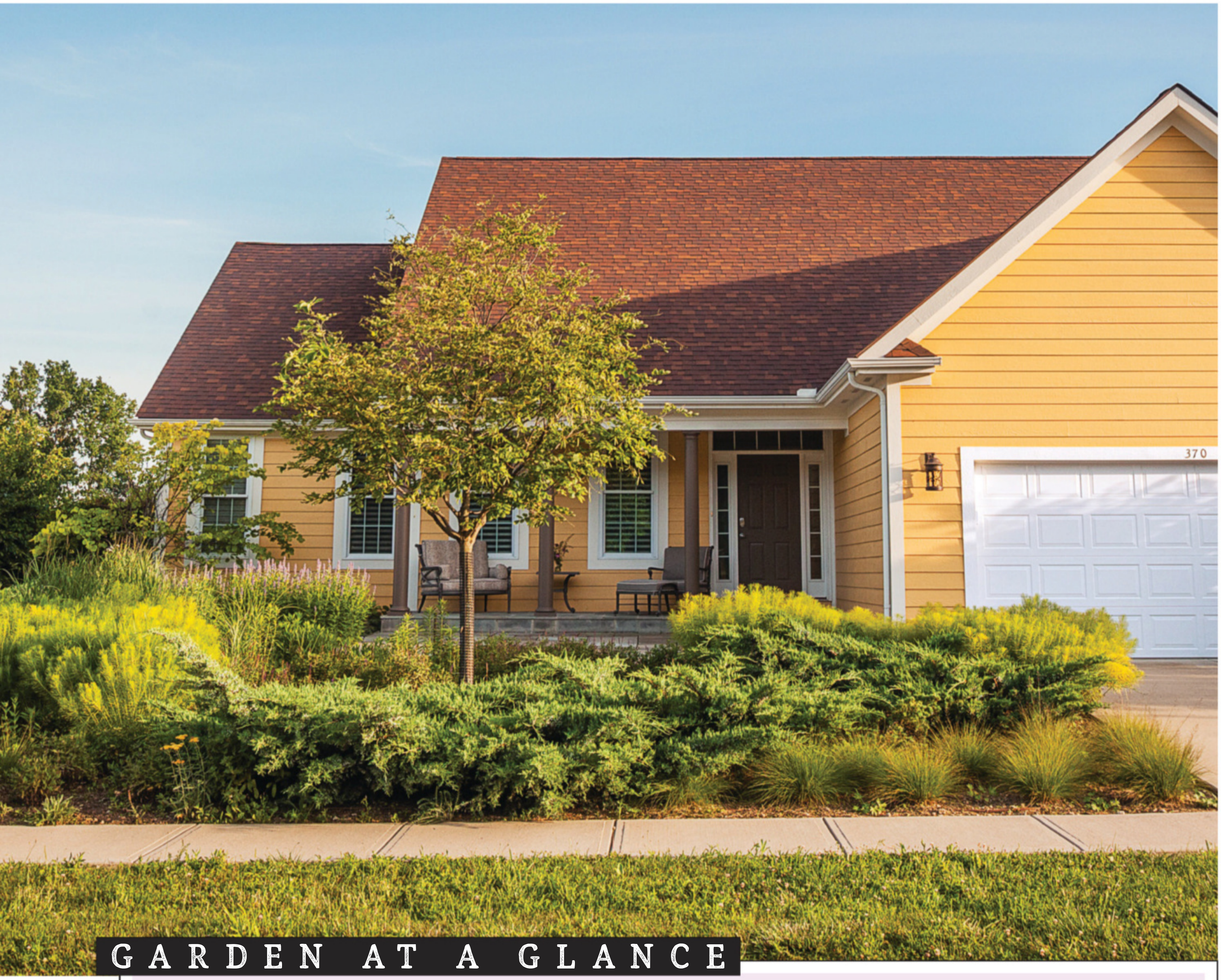
OPPOSITE The neutral tones of the urns and pedestal fountain (all from McCrae's retail store, Shop Living Gardens) contribute to the serene setting and complement the home's design. The exterior was painted gray to blend in. "Nothing was meant to stand out more than anything else," McCrae says. "I always aim to bring an element of water into a space—a pool, fountains, birdbaths. It offers a peaceful feeling."

THIS PHOTO A homeowner's backyard wildlife habitat attracts plenty of birds and insects such as this bumblebee and Red Admiral butterfly sharing a purple coneflower. **RIGHT** Trees, shrubs, and perennials add layers of textural and seasonal interest to the front landscape, which creates a new paradigm for the term "front yard."

POLLINATOR HAVEN

An Ohio homeowner's native garden is a masterpiece that reflects her passion for nature and peaceful spaces.

writer & producer TERESA WOODARD *photographer* BOB STEFKO



GARDEN AT A GLANCE

1-ACRE LOT • YELLOW SPRINGS, OHIO • ZONES 6A/6B

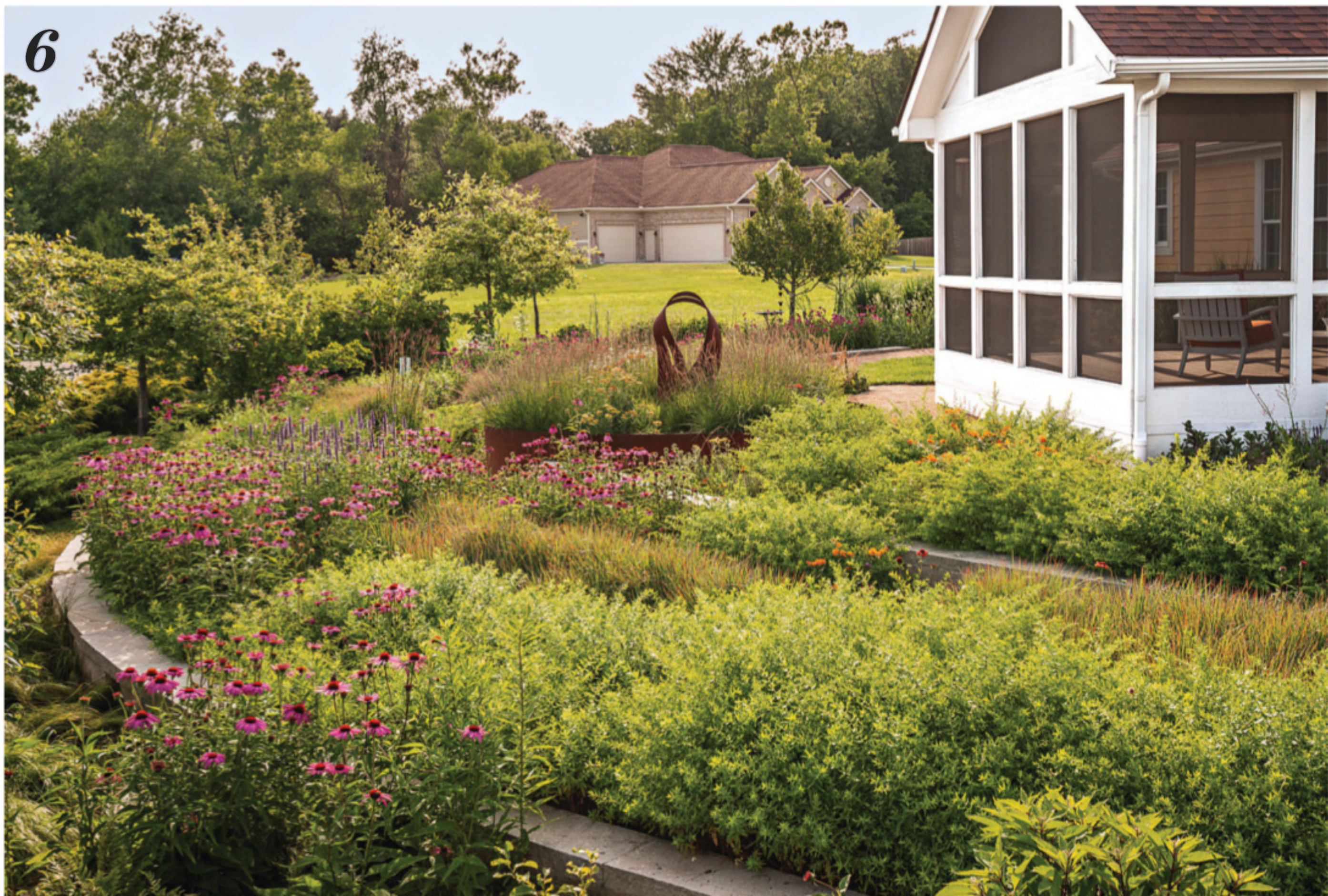
THE DESIGN

“Give me a meadow garden with Swallowtail butterflies and sweet-smelling witch hazels,” homeowner Sheryl Schooley says. She attributes her naturalistic garden’s inspiration to a talk by Doug Tallamy, a professor at the University of Delaware and author of *Bringing Nature Home*. “I heard him say you could plant a native habitat on a small plot—even 10 feet by 10 feet—and the pollinators will find it,” Sheryl says. So in 2012, when she moved to a new neighborhood in Yellow Springs, Ohio, she called on designer Nadia Malarkey to help with creating one of her own. “We ripped up the dense hardpan layer that had been stripped of topsoil and was heavily compacted from construction equipment,” Sheryl says. “Nadia brought in organic compost from a nearby farm and had it tilled into the beds.” Three years later, the project was a finalist in the United Kingdom’s Society of Garden Designers’ awards competition.

THE PLANTS

In front, diverse layers of perennials and native grasses include hardy geraniums, Amsonia, prairie dropseed *(Sporobolus heterolepis)*, purple poppy mallow *(Callirhoe involucrata)*, and many salvias. Malarkey also designed a welcoming entry terrace of local bluestone and connected it to a gravel path that leads through an American beech *(Fagus grandifolia)* hedge to the backyard. In back, three curved terraces slope down from a screen porch and are framed by low stone walls. In the center, Malarkey designed and placed a sculpture in a circular raised bed planted with side-oats gramagrass *(Bouteloua curtipendula)*, Gaillardia, and butterfly weed *(Asclepias tuberosa)*. The first two terraces are filled with meadowlike plantings of prairie grasses, native perennials, and a layer of spring wildflowers. The third terrace at the far edge of the property is lined with groundcover sedges, junipers, witch hazel shrubs, and tupelo (*Nyssa* spp.) trees.

1 No front lawn here. Instead, perennials such as yarrow, hardy geraniums, and Amsonia mingle with small junipers along the sidewalk. *2* Swamp sunflower *(Helianthus angustifolius)* mingles among greenery. *3* Sedge *(Carex pensylvanica)* is planted here as a groundcover and can also be used for sedge lawns. Designer Nadia Malarkey intersperses early-blooming Virginia bluebells among the sedges. *4* Songbirds love to perch on this Mobius strip sculpture—custom-made as a landscape focal point viewed from the back porch. *5* Malarkey, *left*, and homeowner Sheryl Schooley, *right*, in the garden. *6* Malarkey brings structure and intentionality to naturalized perennial and prairie-grass plantings by adding terraced stone walls, crushed limestone paths with crisp metal edging, and a striking weathered-steel sculpture. Despite it’s small size, Sheryl’s suburban plot lives large because of the structural elements and dense plantings.



DESIGN NOTES

Designer Nadia Malarkey adds these key elements to a suburban garden.

PRACTICES

START WITH HEALTHY SOIL Many suburban yards are overcompacted and stripped of valuable topsoil. Test the soil and amend with organic matter as needed.

APPLY A LAYER OF LEAF MULCH This helps suppress weeds and retain water. Malarkey also recommends pulling weeds rather than treating them with chemicals.

HARVEST WATER Support new plantings by using water collectors such as rain barrels or an underground cistern.

LET GRASSES AND SEED HEADS STAND THROUGH WINTER They add beauty, prevent erosion, and provide food and shelter for birds and insects.

COLLABORATE WITH NEIGHBORS Help diversify your neighborhood's plants.

STRUCTURES

ADD SCULPTURAL ELEMENTS A steel Mobius strip, garden bench, and birdbath make the space look intentional.

INCORPORATE SIGNS Use words such as "Pollinator Habitat" to inform neighbors. Check with groups such as Monarch Watch, the National Wildlife Federation, and the Xerces Society for certification and signage.

USE HARDSCAPES TO DEFINE SPACES Here, terraces with stone walls add definition and varying levels to a naturalized area.

PLANTS

GRASSES Prairie dropseed, little bluestem, big bluestem, and side-oats grama add beauty and nesting habitat. Start with plants versus seeds for quicker results.

FLOWERS Combine a range of perennials that offers pollinators an ongoing smorgasbord of nectar and pollen from early spring to fall.

SHRUBS AND TREES Add layers of interest with woody plants such as juniper, Northern spicebush, American hazelnut, and tupelo trees.

GROUNDCOVERS Underplant trees or line paths with carpets of native sedges such as *Carex pensylvanica* or *Carex appalachica*.

AVOID AND REMOVE INVASIVE PLANTS For more information visit *invasivespeciesinfo.gov*.

As neighbors pass by on the subdivision's walking trail, they often pause to admire Sheryl's backyard. "One day when I was hot and tired of weeding," Sheryl says, "I overhead a little girl on a bike say to her family, 'This is my favorite yard! Have you ever smelled it?' Just when I was ready to quit, her words pushed me to keep gardening and encouraging others to get on board with native plants."

ADD A TREE
TO A SMALL SPACE

You might assume a tree has no business living in a petite landscape, but those leaves and branches should feel welcome. Here's why.

3 TREE BENEFITS

NATURAL CANOPY Most of the square footage encompassed by a tree is above ground level, which means there is often ample planting space for shade-loving plants, *right*, and room for seating under the canopy of a small deciduous tree.

FOCAL POINT From a design perspective, vertical elements in the landscape create a sense of greater expanse: A small tree can draw the eye up to the vastness of space beyond the garden underfoot, visually extending the area.

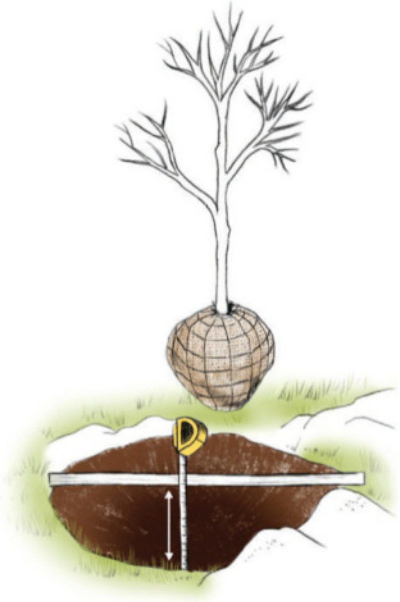
SHADY SPOT A well-placed small tree can define a space, *opposite,* and provide a living ceiling above a garden gathering spot, which adds a sense of intimacy.

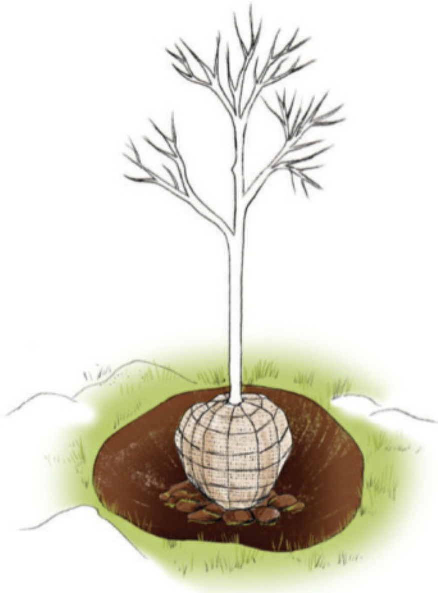
SIZE GUIDE

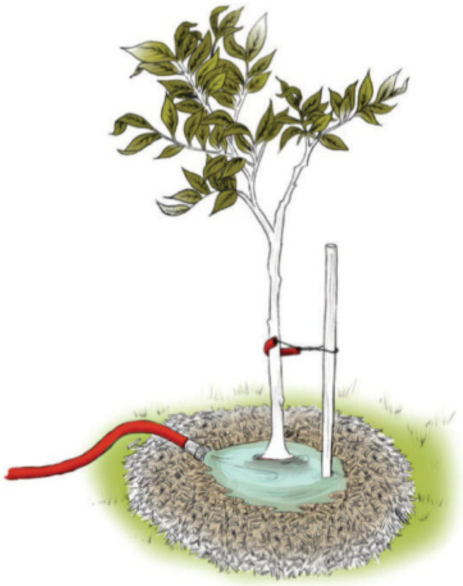
After considering the light and soil conditions of a tree's planting site, estimate the space available for it to grow. Be especially mindful of the width of the growing space, then consider height: A 20- to 25-foot-tall tree complements a single-story building while a 40-foot-tall tree best fits a two-story building.

HOW TO PLANT A TREE

Trees are an investment. Thoughtful planting goes a long way toward ensuring decades of healthy growth for your new tree. Whether you are planting a balled-and-burlapped, container-grown, or bare-root tree, take time to establish the proper planting depth.







① **DIG THE HOLE** Dig a planting hole as deep as the root ball and twice as wide. To ensure the correct depth, lay a stick across the planting hole and use a tape measure to gauge depth. Reserve excavated soil on a tarp nearby. You'll use it to backfill around the tree.

② **CHECK THE DEPTH** Planting a tree too deep can cause many problems. Before backfilling with the native soil, check the depth. The top of the root ball should be level with, or slightly above, the surrounding grade. Pull back the burlap on the top of the root ball, snip twine off the trunk, and remove the wire basket, if present, before backfilling the hole, tamping soil in firmly around the root ball.

③ **WATER WELL** Water newly planted trees at least weekly (daily during dry weather). Use soil to build a water-holding berm around the tree. A couple of inches of mulch will help, too, but keep it at least 6 inches away from the trunk to prevent fungal decay.

PHOTOGRAPHERS: (OPPOSITE) BOB STEFKO, (ABOVE) ED GOHLICH; ILLUSTRATIONS: LA SCARLATTE/MAGNET REPS.

BACKYARD RETREATS

PUT A PATIO

IN YOUR OUTDOOR SPACE

Swap a grassy patch for a hard surface to hang with friends, grow potted plants, or both—plus, you'll save on water bills and mowing time.

① **PLAN YOUR SPACE** Lay a garden hose on the ground or use stakes and mason line to define the shape of your patio. Using a sharp garden spade, remove the sod and soil at the patio location. Excavate an 8-inch-deep base plus the thickness of the flagstone, brick, or paver. If you're building a patio near your home, slope the site away from your home's exterior. Use a level to create a 1-inch drop every 4 feet. Once the sod is removed, use a tamper to compact the soil.

② **CREATE A BARRIER** Line the excavated area with landscape fabric, cutting the fabric to fit.

③ **LAY DOWN A BASE** Add gravel or crushed limestone to the excavated area and spread it to form a 6-inch-deep layer over the entire patio space.

④ **PUT PAVERS IN PLACE** Lay the first flagstones or pavers on one side of the DIY patio. Add sand underneath the stones as necessary to create a nearly level surface. Place the stones as close together as possible to prevent weeds.

⑤ **TOP IT OFF** After all the bricks, pavers, or flagstones are in place, spread polymeric jointing sand over the patio. Use a stiff broom to sweep the sand over the pavers until the cracks are filled. Remove excess sand using a leaf blower at low speed. Water the surface with a fine mist from a garden hose to encourage the sand to sink into the spaces between the stones. Repeat this step about a week after construction to ensure a durable finish.

4 GROUNDCOVER ALTERNATIVES

Swap grass for one of these durable, water-wise options:

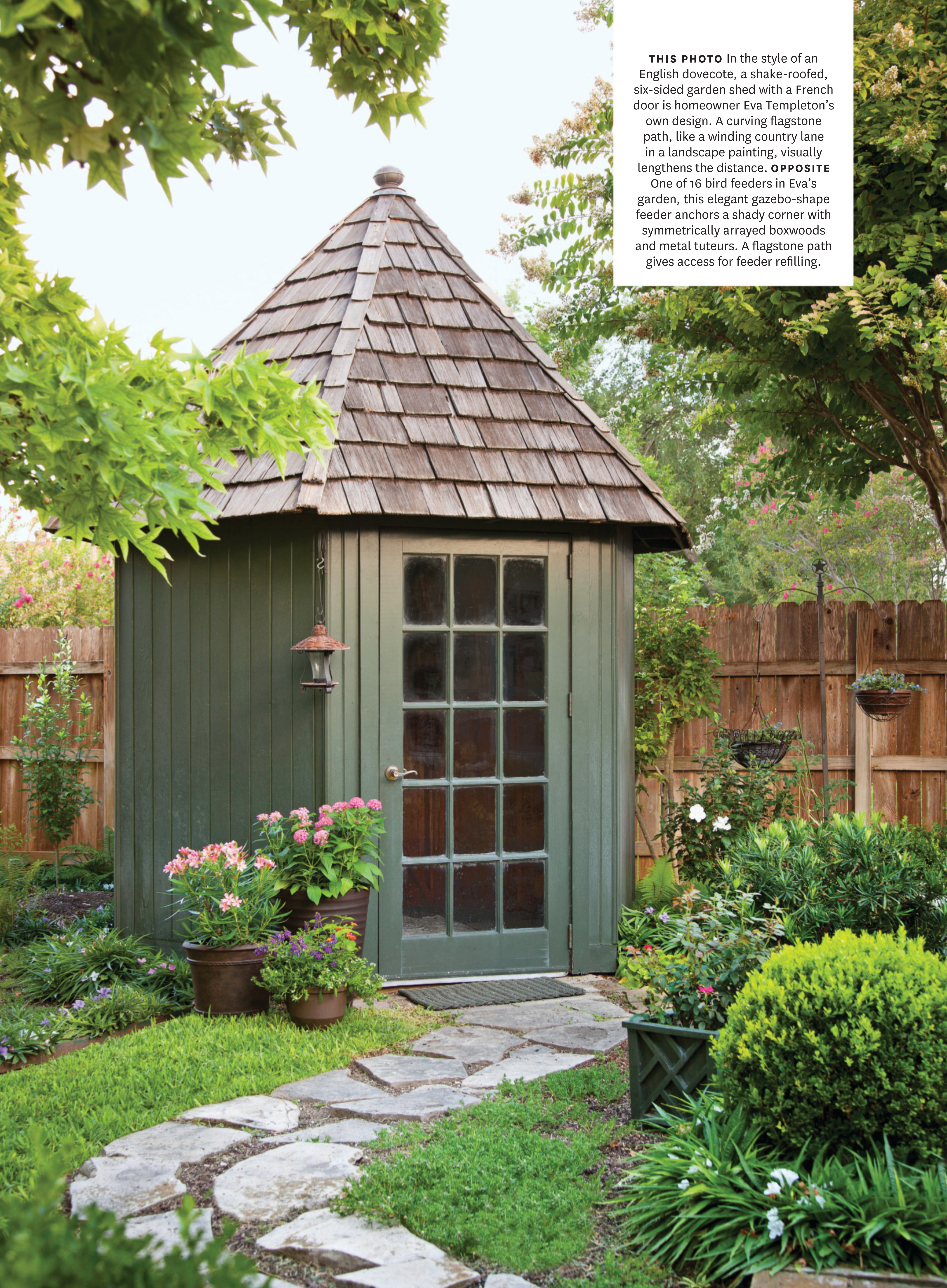
GRAVEL

ARTIFICIAL TURF

TURKEY TANGLE FROGFRUIT
(PHYLA NODIFLORA)

FLOWERBED

PHOTOGRAPHERS: (OPPOSITE) JOHN GRUEN, (RIGHT) ED GOHLICH



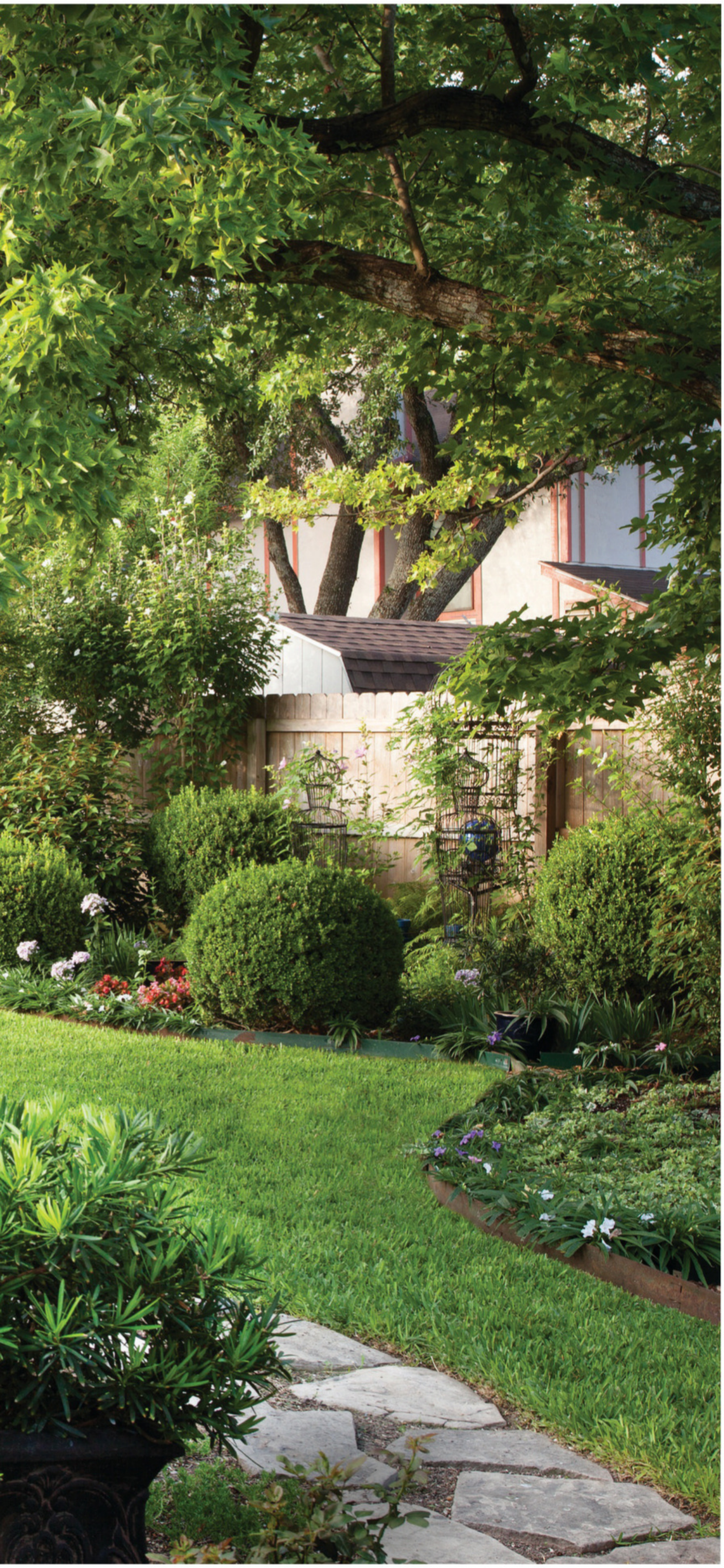
THIS PHOTO In the style of an English dovecote, a shake-roofed, six-sided garden shed with a French door is homeowner Eva Templeton's own design. A curving flagstone path, like a winding country lane in a landscape painting, visually lengthens the distance. **OPPOSITE** One of 16 bird feeders in Eva's garden, this elegant gazebo-shape feeder anchors a shady corner with symmetrically arrayed boxwoods and metal tuteurs. A flagstone path gives access for feeder refilling.

Planting a Canvas

A Texas gardener uses visual tricks such as color, perspective, and balance to create an expansive landscape.

writer & producer PAM PENICK *photographer* RYANN FORD

Symmetrical elements, such as a focal-point trio of shapely tuteurs and a large birdcage flanked by matching boxwoods, help Eva achieve a pleasing balance. “Everything has to be orderly,” she says with a smile. “I think that’s the German in me.” The home’s covered porch offers the perfect spot to rest and take it all in.



GARDEN AT A GLANCE

RECTANGULAR SUBURBAN LOT

SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS

ZONES 8B/9A

THE DESIGN

“There are all kinds of tricks you can do to make a garden look larger,” says homeowner Eva Templeton. “My backyard isn’t that big. It’s what I did to it that makes it look big.” Eva, a retired art teacher, started putting her artist’s eye to work on her blank-slate backyard 47 years ago. Using visual tricks and ample elbow grease, she coaxed her suburban rectangle into a lush haven and conjured the illusion of an expansive landscape.

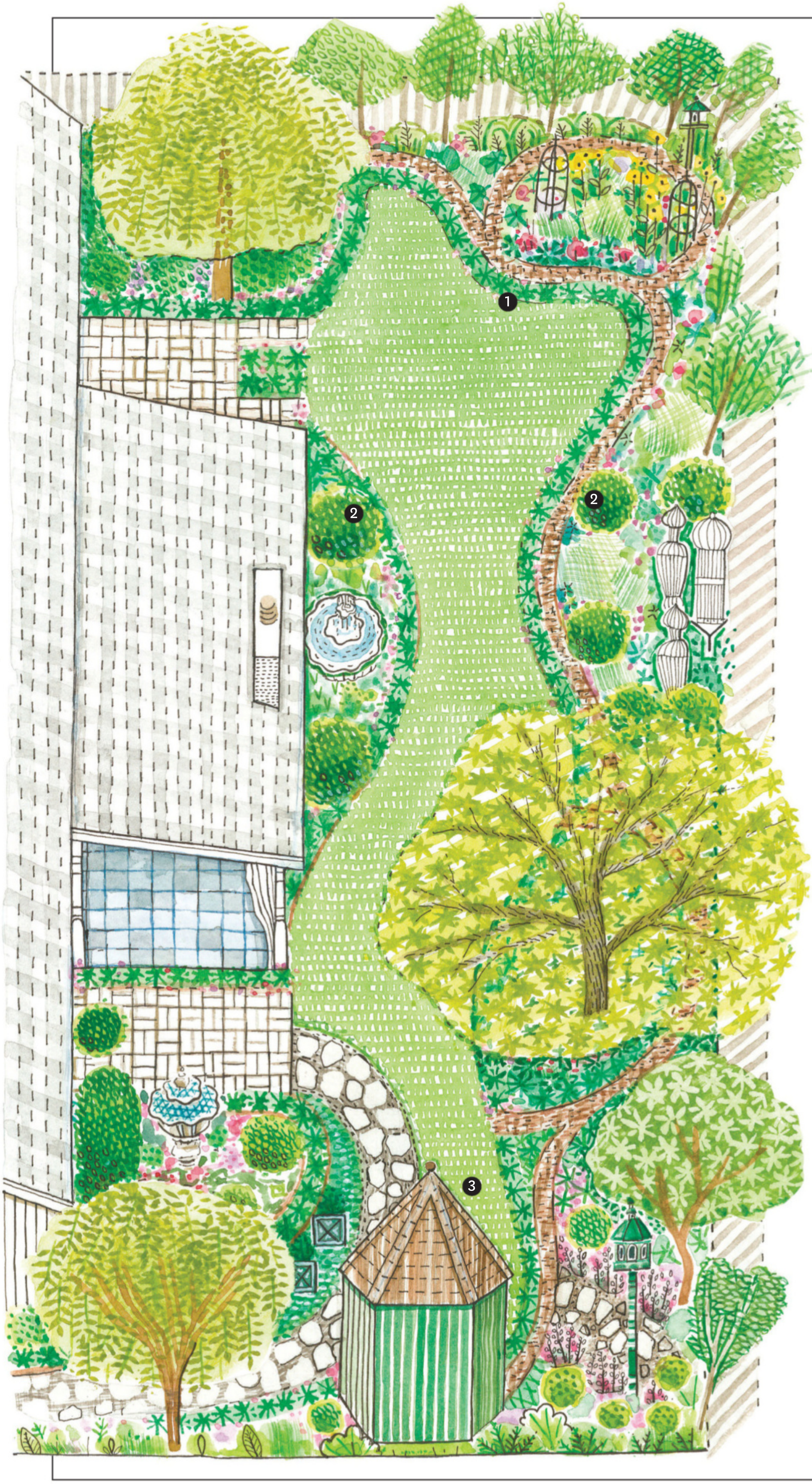
As a young art student in Germany, Eva studied the Old Masters. From their atmospheric landscapes she learned to use perspective, color, and balance. After immigrating and moving into a new home in San Antonio in 1978, she translated these techniques to her landscape. Playing with perspective gives her shallow garden a greater sense of depth. “In a landscape painting, a dark shape in the foreground makes the brighter landscape in the distance seem endless,” she says. “That works in your garden too. Put a dark shrub or a big dark pot in the foreground to make the other side of your garden look farther away.”

THE PLANTS

Deep, curving beds along the fence are filled with boxwood, small trees such as rose of Sharon and crape myrtle, and flowering perennials and annuals including red wax begonias, Knock Out roses, lily of the Nile *(Agapanthus africanus)*, and a border of dwarf Mexican petunia *(Ruellia brittoniana)*. More color comes from summer stalwarts *Phlox paniculata* ‘Bright Eyes’, sunflower *(Helianthus annuus)*, and moss rose (*Portulaca grandiflora* ‘Mojave Pink’). “I never use pesticides,” Eva says. “The birds feed bugs to their babies.”

> "TO ME, GARDENING IS THE BEST EXERCISE YOU CAN DO. IT'S MY PARADISE."
>
> —HOMEOWNER EVA TEMPLETON

LEFT AND BELOW Eva is generous with color in her garden beds, adding dashes of red, pink, and purple flowers, like this 'Katie' Mexican petunia (*Ruellia brittoniana* 'Katie'). But she wields her paintbrush with restraint when choosing accessories, opting for dark pots and gray-green paint for her custom garden shed. "It's not fair to the flowers to compete with brightly colored pots," she says. "It's the flowers I want to see."



DESIGN YOUR GARDEN LIKE AN ARTIST

Use basic art techniques as Eva Templeton does to alter the perception and experience of your yard.

1 DRAW STRONG LINES TO DEFINE GARDEN BEDS, PATHS, AND PATIOS

Whether straight lines or curves ("easier to mow around than corners," Eva says), lay out your design with garden hoses or by spraying marking paint on the lawn. Live with it for a few days—walk the paths and place furniture—before committing.

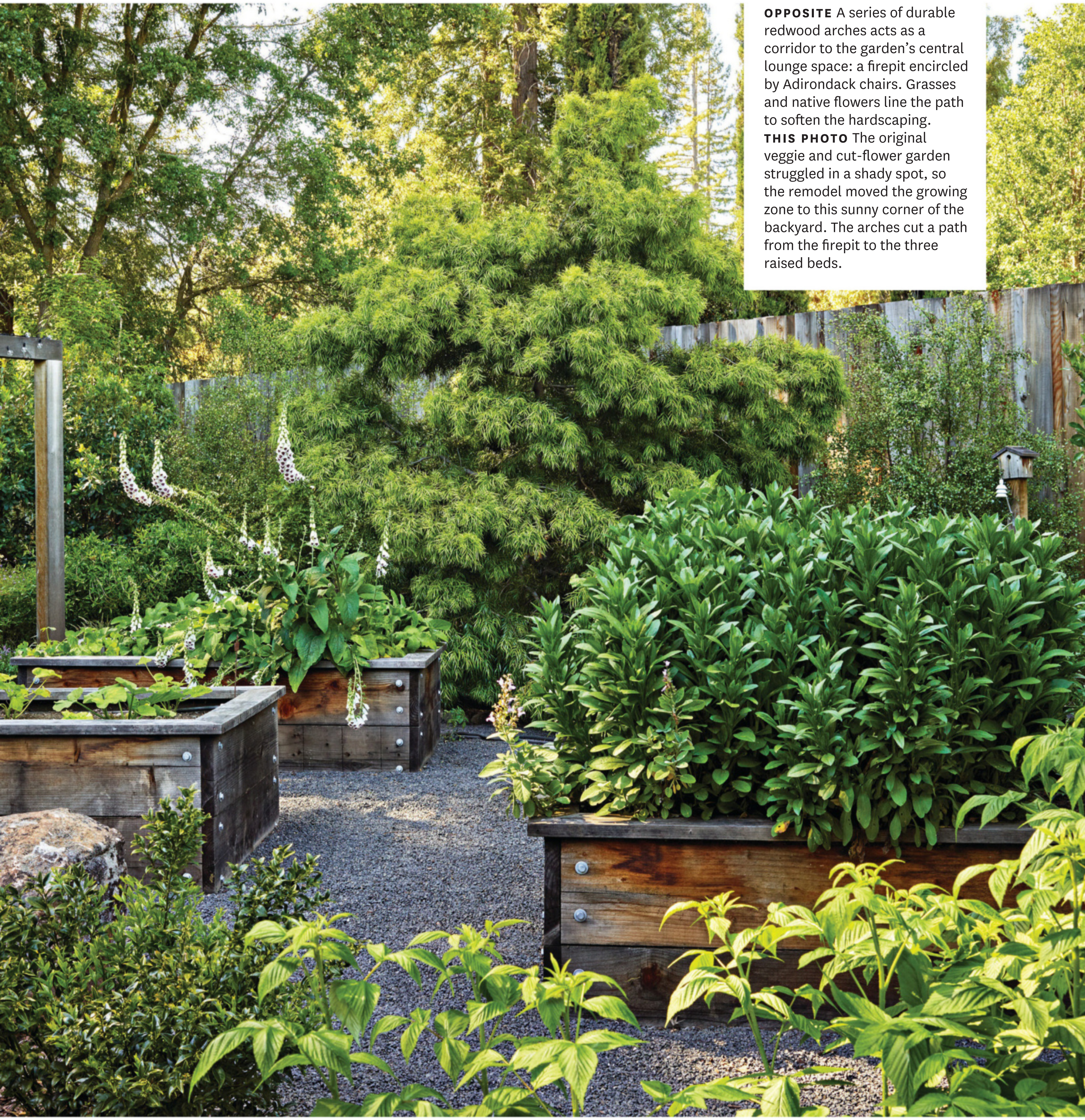
2 PLAY WITH PERSPECTIVE

This painting technique fools the eye and makes a small space look larger. Let closer elements be bigger (like Eva's pair of clipped boxwoods by her porch), and make distant elements smaller (matching boxwoods near her back fence are clipped several inches shorter), creating the illusion of greater distance. You can also use this trick with a path: wider at the start and narrower at the end, making the distance seem longer. "Think of railroad tracks running toward the horizon," Eva says.

3 ADD FOCAL POINTS TO DRAW THE EYE OUT

A garden shed, fountain, large pot, or even an arrangement of birdhouses can help organize the view. Place them along the axes of your garden—at the intersection of two paths or at the end of a path—or where you can see them from an alfresco seating area or indoors.

IN THE ZONE



OPPOSITE A series of durable redwood arches acts as a corridor to the garden's central lounge space: a firepit encircled by Adirondack chairs. Grasses and native flowers line the path to soften the hardscaping. **THIS PHOTO** The original veggie and cut-flower garden struggled in a shady spot, so the remodel moved the growing zone to this sunny corner of the backyard. The arches cut a path from the firepit to the three raised beds.

Empty nesters take their backyard from inefficient to eco-friendly, with defined areas for growing, entertaining, and relaxing.

writer MIKE IRVINE *photographer* MARION BRENNER

> “ONE OF THE BEST THINGS THIS REDESIGN ALLOWED US TO DO WAS DONATE THE LAWN MOWER.”
>
> —HOMEOWNER ALISTAIR SHEARER

GROUND RULES

More than half of the contiguous United States experienced drought last fall, so it’s worth considering landscaping water needs. Preserve resources with these tips.

1 INVEST IN SOIL

Mixing compost and organic matter into your soil improves drought-resistance and drainage. Cover bare spots with mulch to help retain moisture and slow evaporation.

2 LIKE WITH LIKE

Cluster plants with similar water needs in zones so that you can manage irrigation section by section.

3 SLOW AND STEADY

Watering at full blast for short periods of time does more harm than good. Instead, soak the soil slowly to prevent runoff and deeply to create strong root systems.

4 GET SMART

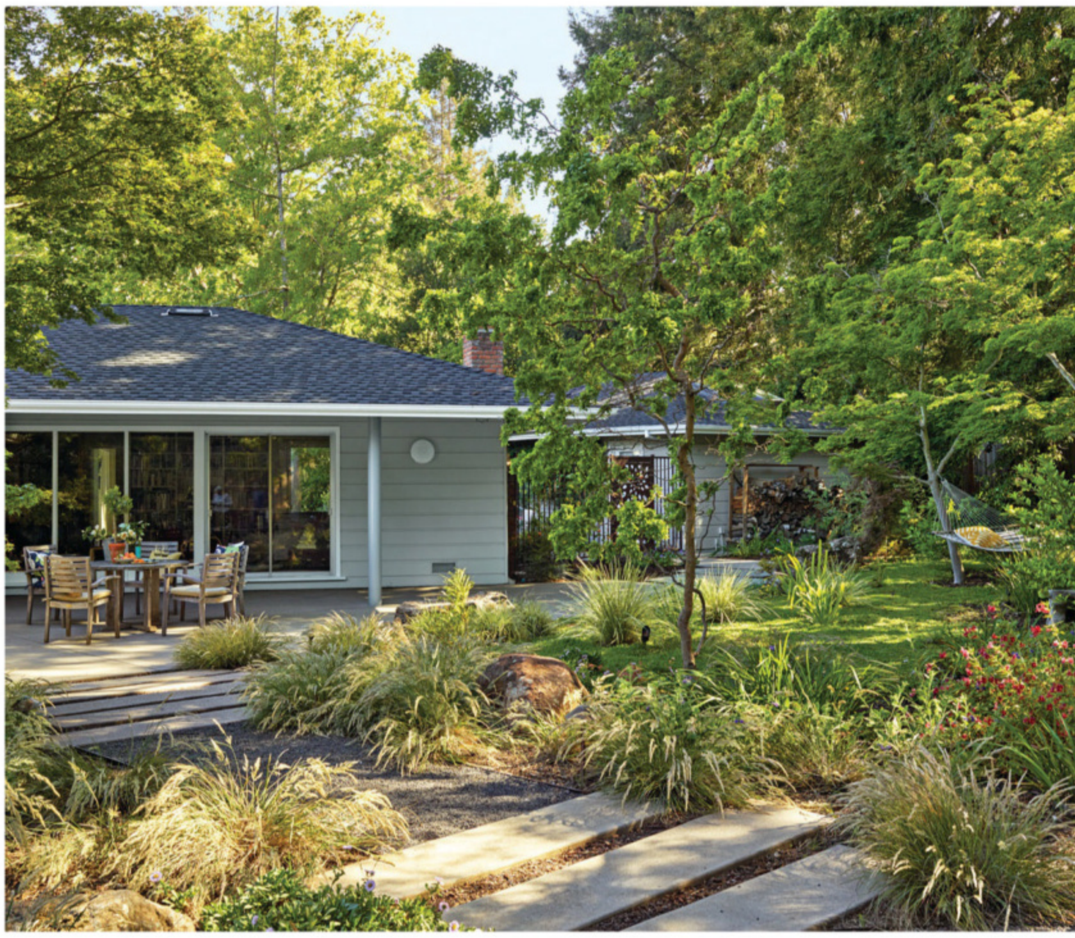
Use drip irrigation whenever possible. Test the system monthly to find wasteful breaks or leaks, and try a smart controller that adjusts for weather conditions. Landscape designer Julie Lienert recommends: the Pro-HC from Hunter, the Rachio 3, or the budget-friendly Orbit B-hyve.

5 EVERY DROP COUNTS

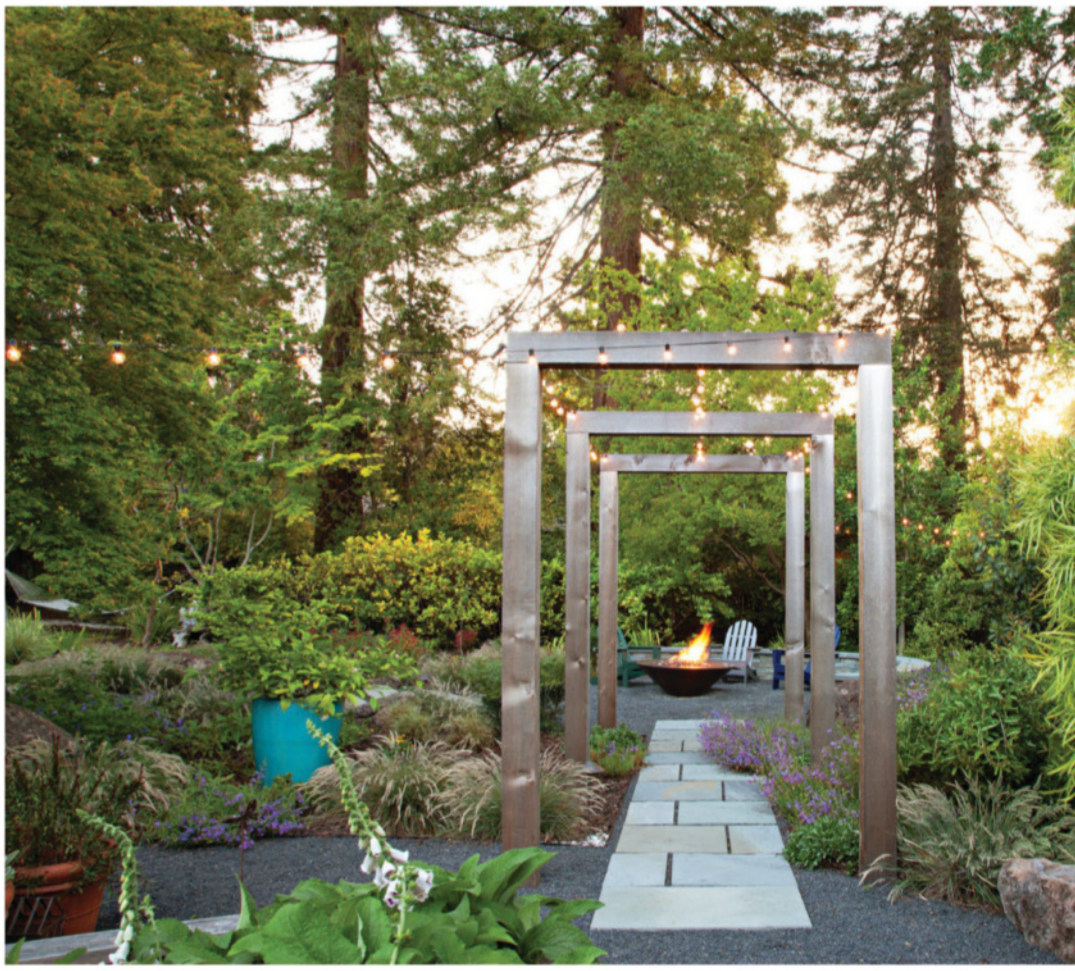
To capture rainwater to reuse for irrigating, install a simple wood or food-safe plastic barrel beneath a roof downspout (to learn how to make your own, see *page 94*).

6 NOT-SO-HARDSCAPE

Install permeable materials for driveways, paths, and patios to prevent runoff. Decomposed granite, crushed gravel, flagstone, and porous concrete pads are all good options.



OPPOSITE A groundcover called Kurapia, which needs little water and handles light foot traffic, replaced the lawn in the relaxation zone, where a hammock beckons. Others to try: creeping thymes and mounding fescues. **ABOVE** A path of rectangular stone tiles echoes the horizontal lines of the house and bridges the space between the deck and firepit entertaining zones. Mature Japanese maples let in just enough sun to make the Mendocino reed grasses shimmer. **BELOW** Guests around the firepit never guess they're standing above a 7,100-gallon rainwater tank. Downspouts from the house direct rainwater to the tank, which provides water for irrigation. The firepit's wide rim serves as a surface for drinks or feet when the fire is out.



GARDEN AT A GLANCE

SUBURBAN BACKYARD

LAFAYETTE, CALIFORNIA

ZONE 9B

THE DESIGN

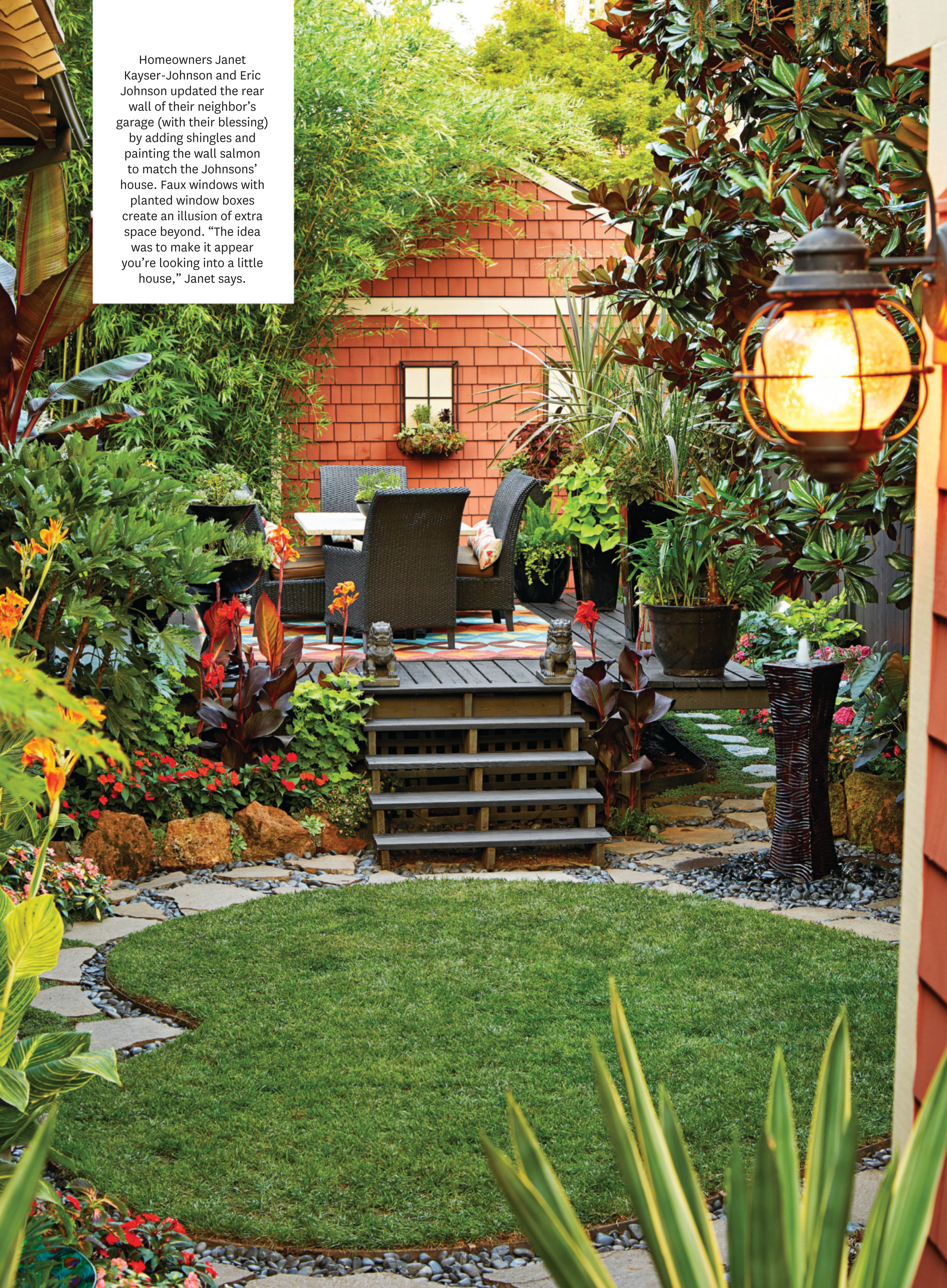
While raising two daughters at their suburban home near San Francisco, Alistair and Jeanette Shearer didn't pay much attention to the backyard, an expanse of lawn and concrete around a 1960s pool. But after their daughters left for college, the couple cast a more critical eye out their back windows, envisioning a retreat where they could garden, relax, and entertain.

They realized their vision with the help of Roxy Designs, a sustainable landscape design company run by owner Roxy Wolosenko and designer Julie Lienert. The team divided the standard-size suburban backyard into three zones: a firepit for entertaining, raised beds for growing vegetables and flowers, and a lawn with a hammock for relaxing. Despite being just steps from one another, the zones function independently from each other like the rooms in a house. "These days," Alistair says, "the garden is even more important than our indoor spaces."

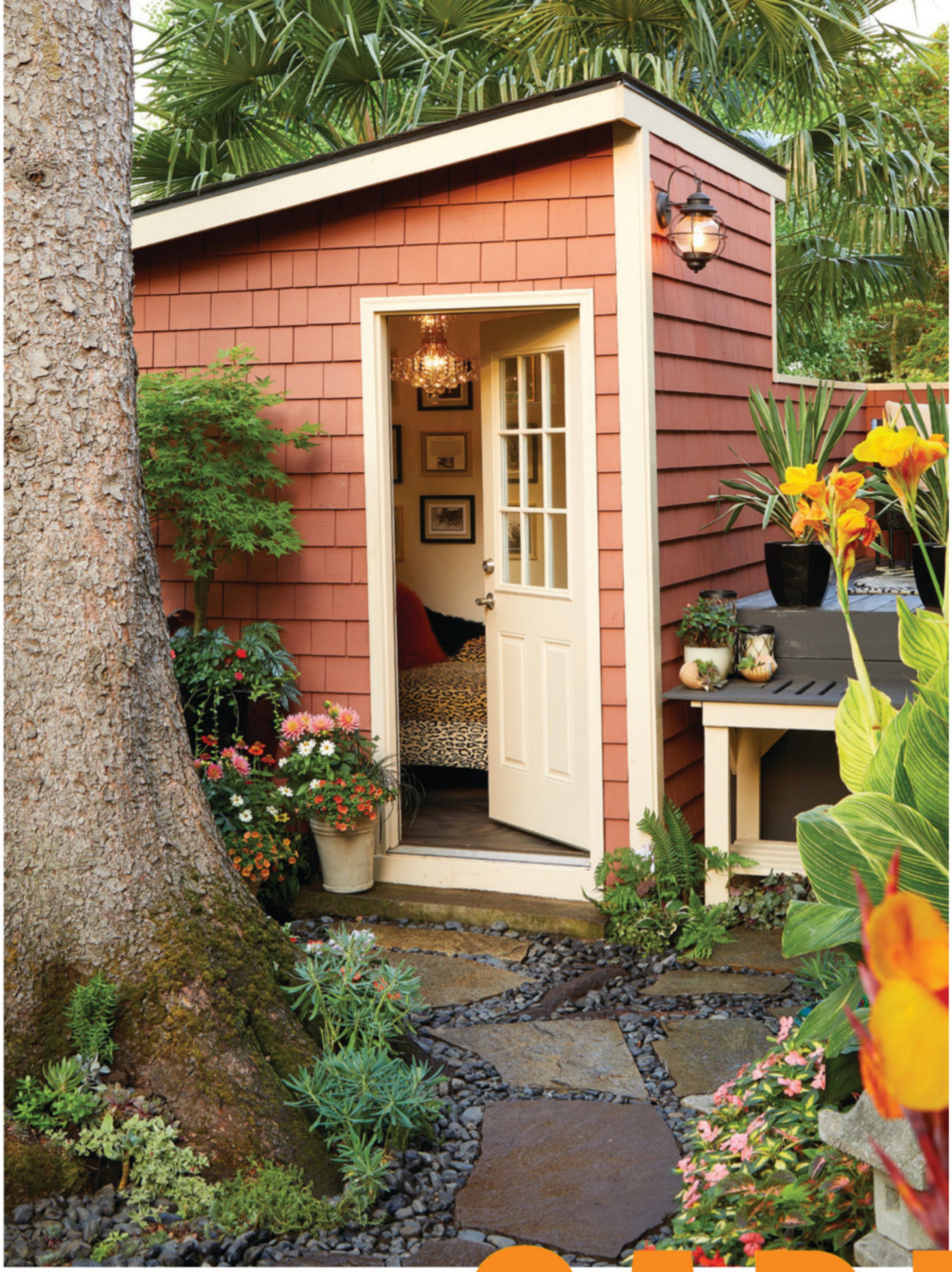
THE PLANTS

To conserve water—vital in drought-prone California—and maximize growing space, the designers tore out the lawn, the concrete, and the pool (which, in a particularly ambitious move, they converted into an underground tank to hold rainwater). In their place, Wolosenko and Lienert surrounded a firepit area with low-water Mediterranean and California natives, plus raised beds.

Today, Jeanette loves tending to her tomatoes or reading in the hammock. Alistair gets lost in doing the pruning and deadheading. "I think the redesign has changed the way they connect to their outdoor space," Lienert says.



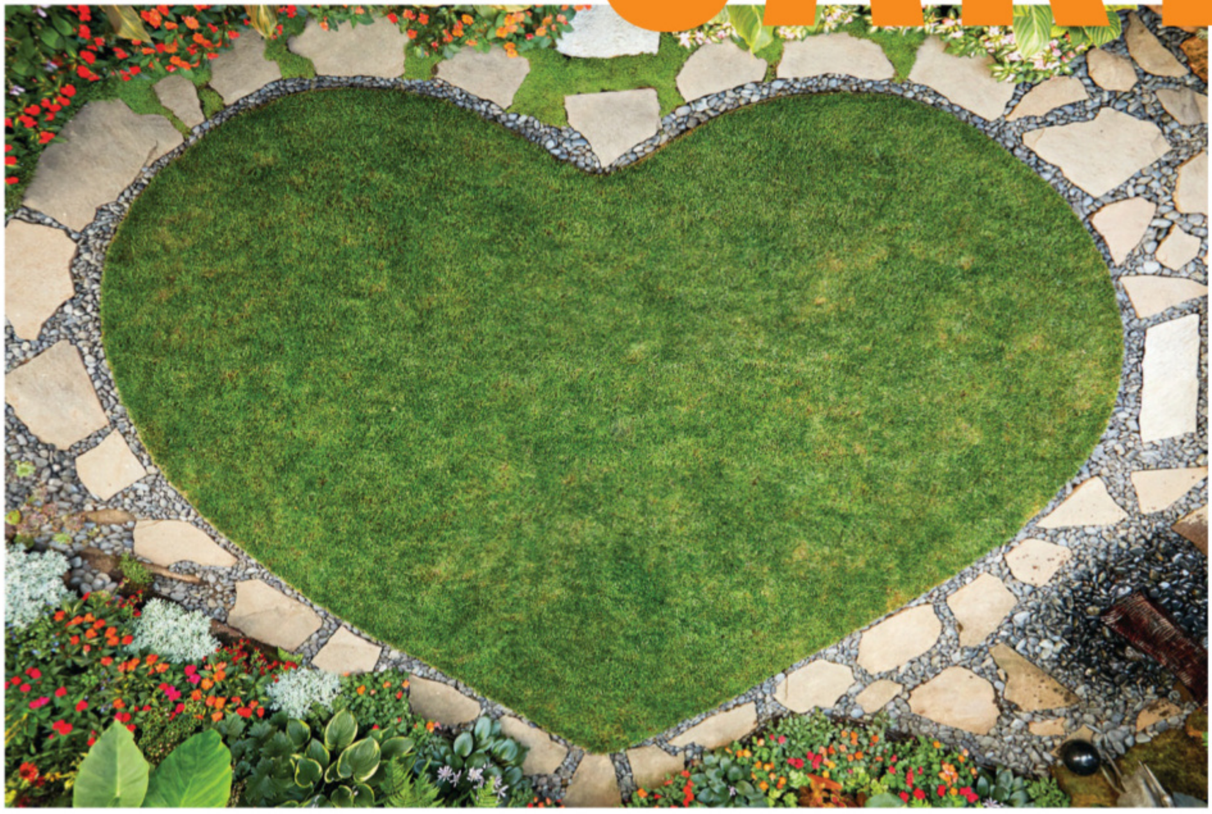
Homeowners Janet Kayser-Johnson and Eric Johnson updated the rear wall of their neighbor's garage (with their blessing) by adding shingles and painting the wall salmon to match the Johnsons' house. Faux windows with planted window boxes create an illusion of extra space beyond. "The idea was to make it appear you're looking into a little house," Janet says.



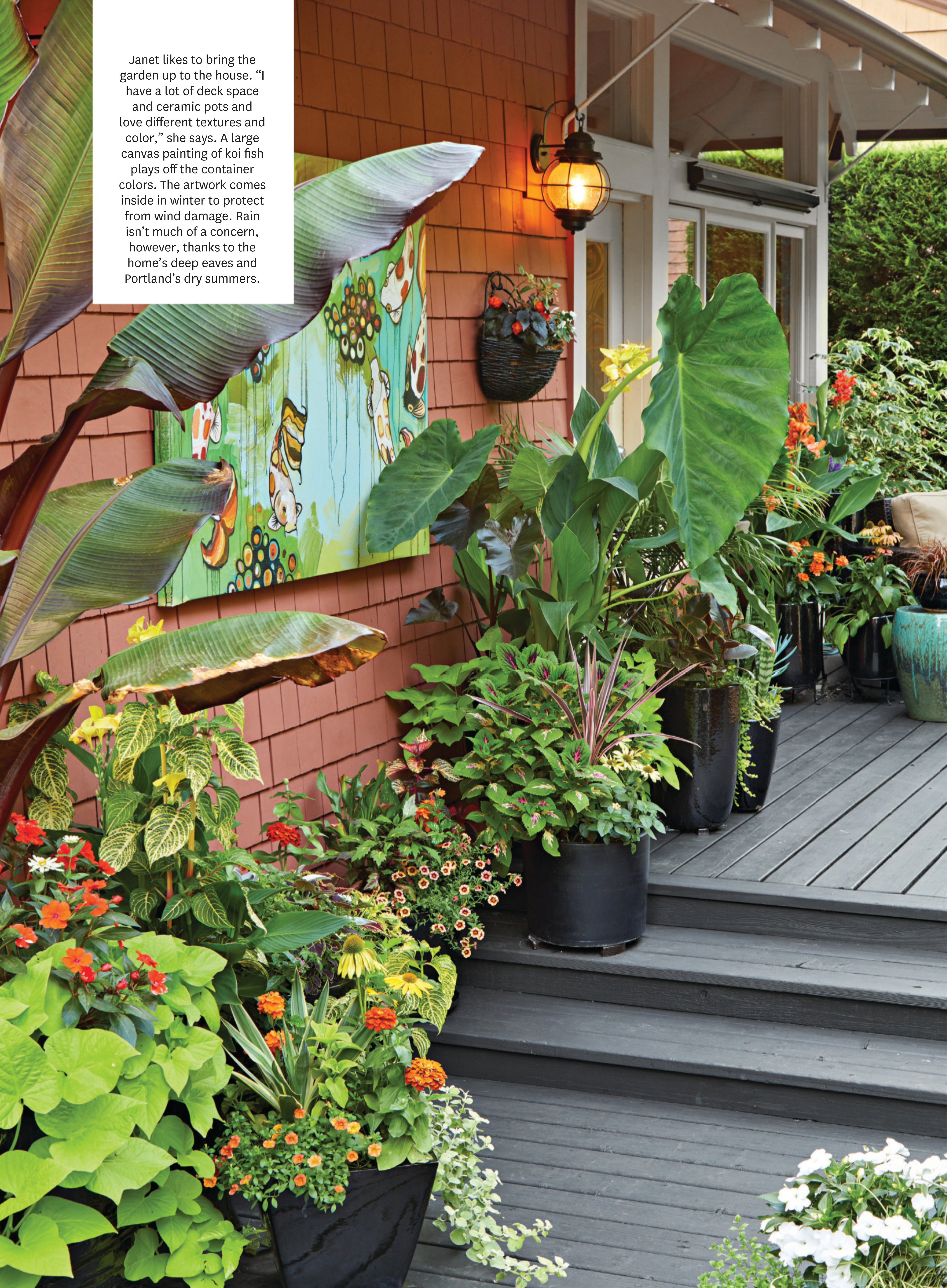
An Oregon couple transformed a backyard with limited space into a charming escape that reflects their love, their creativity, and the nature around them.

writer PAM PENICK
photographer BRIE GOLDMAN
stylist SUSAN APPLEGET HURST

HEARTFELT GARDEN



ABOVE LEFT Eric built a toolshed for Janet that doubles as an elegant retreat with a cushioned chaise. Nautical-style lanterns and a romantic chandelier cast a warm glow in the evening, extending enjoyment of the garden after the sun goes down. **LEFT** The couple reshaped a rectangular lawn into a heart to create a surprising focal point. It also gave Janet room for a few more plants around the edges—red SunPatiens and coleus add vivid color.



Janet likes to bring the garden up to the house. “I have a lot of deck space and ceramic pots and love different textures and color,” she says. A large canvas painting of koi fish plays off the container colors. The artwork comes inside in winter to protect from wind damage. Rain isn’t much of a concern, however, thanks to the home’s deep eaves and Portland’s dry summers.

GARDEN AT A GLANCE

22×35-FOOT BACKYARD

PORTLAND, OREGON

ZONE 8B

THE DESIGN

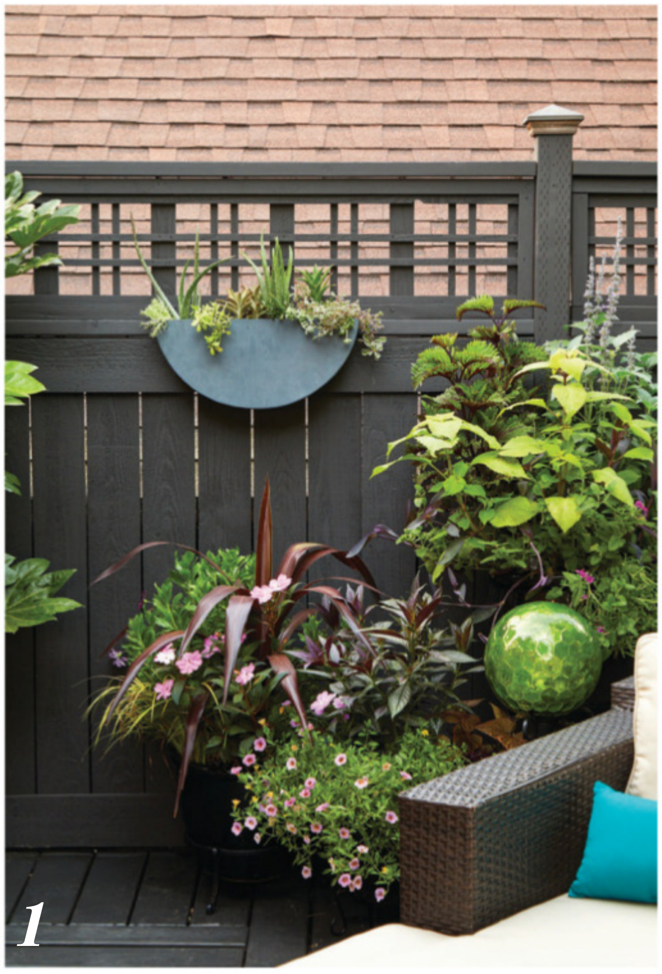
When Janet Kayser-Johnson and Eric Johnson were dating, he gave her a heart necklace. That romantic gesture was offered again, years later, when the couple pondered what to do with their tight backyard. "How about making it a heart shape?" Eric proposed. Janet said yes.

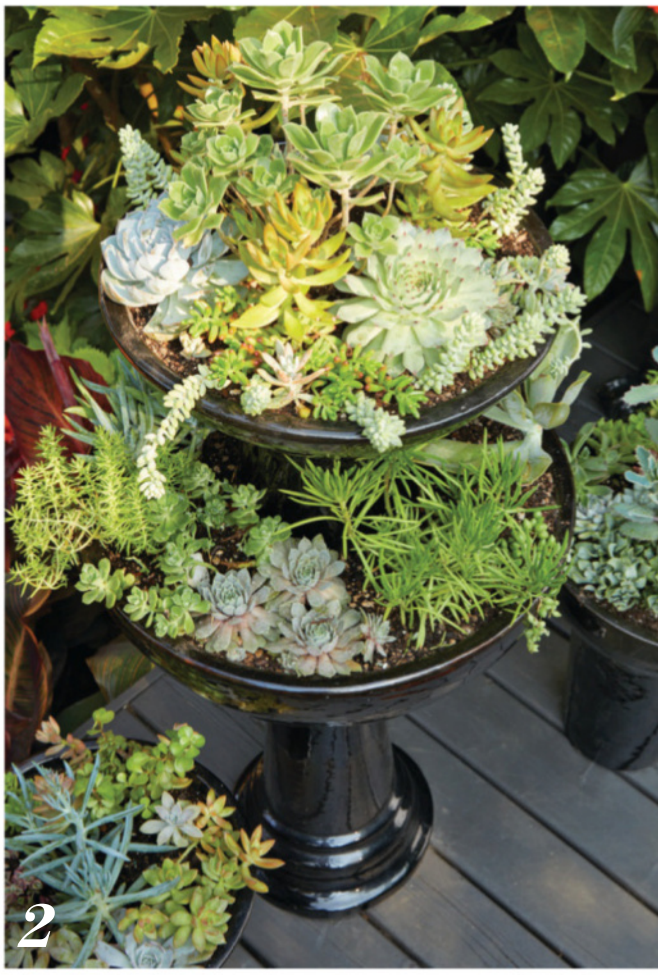
Outlined by a flagstone path, the green heart of the garden expresses not only the couple's creativity, but also their love for family, friends, and the tropical-esque garden they share with them.

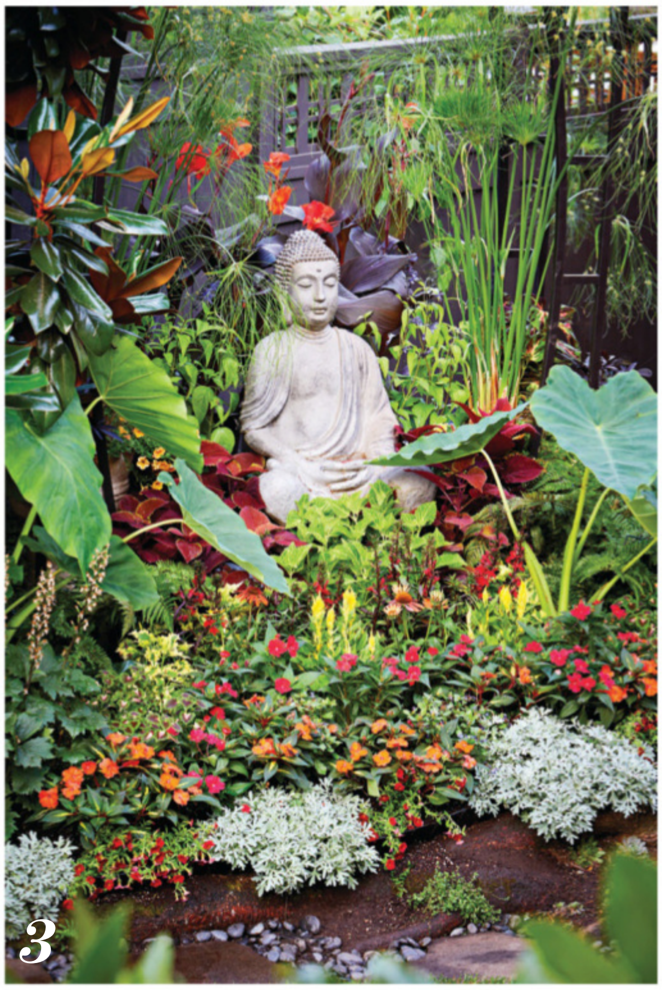
The lushly planted space is vastly different from the bare dirt and jumble of fallen branches they inherited with the house. Eric reconfigured oversize decks, removing part of one to make room for a shed and redesigning another as a better space to entertain. An outdoor kitchen, bar seating, a sofa, and a firepit maximize their small yard and extend its use for most of the year. Art hung on the exterior walls makes the space just as inviting as inside their home.

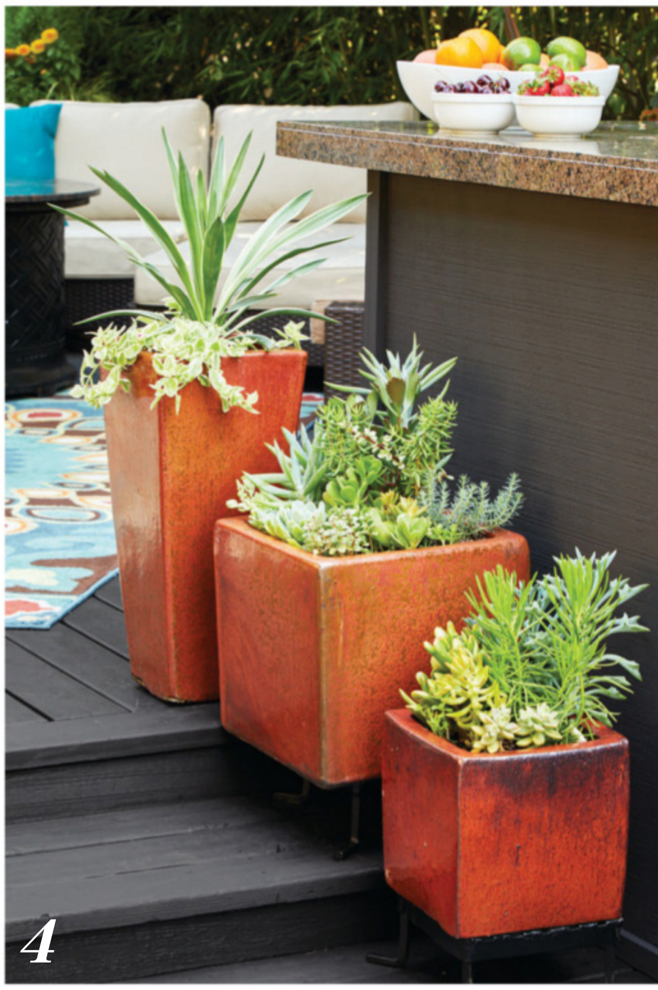
THE PLANTS

The backyard is awash with hot orange and red flowers, paddle-size leaves, and rustling bamboo. A stone-pillar fountain, Foo dog statues, and panels of bold art add layers. Janet delights in creating showy containers to display on the spacious deck. "I love using different textures and grouping plants by color to add drama," she says.



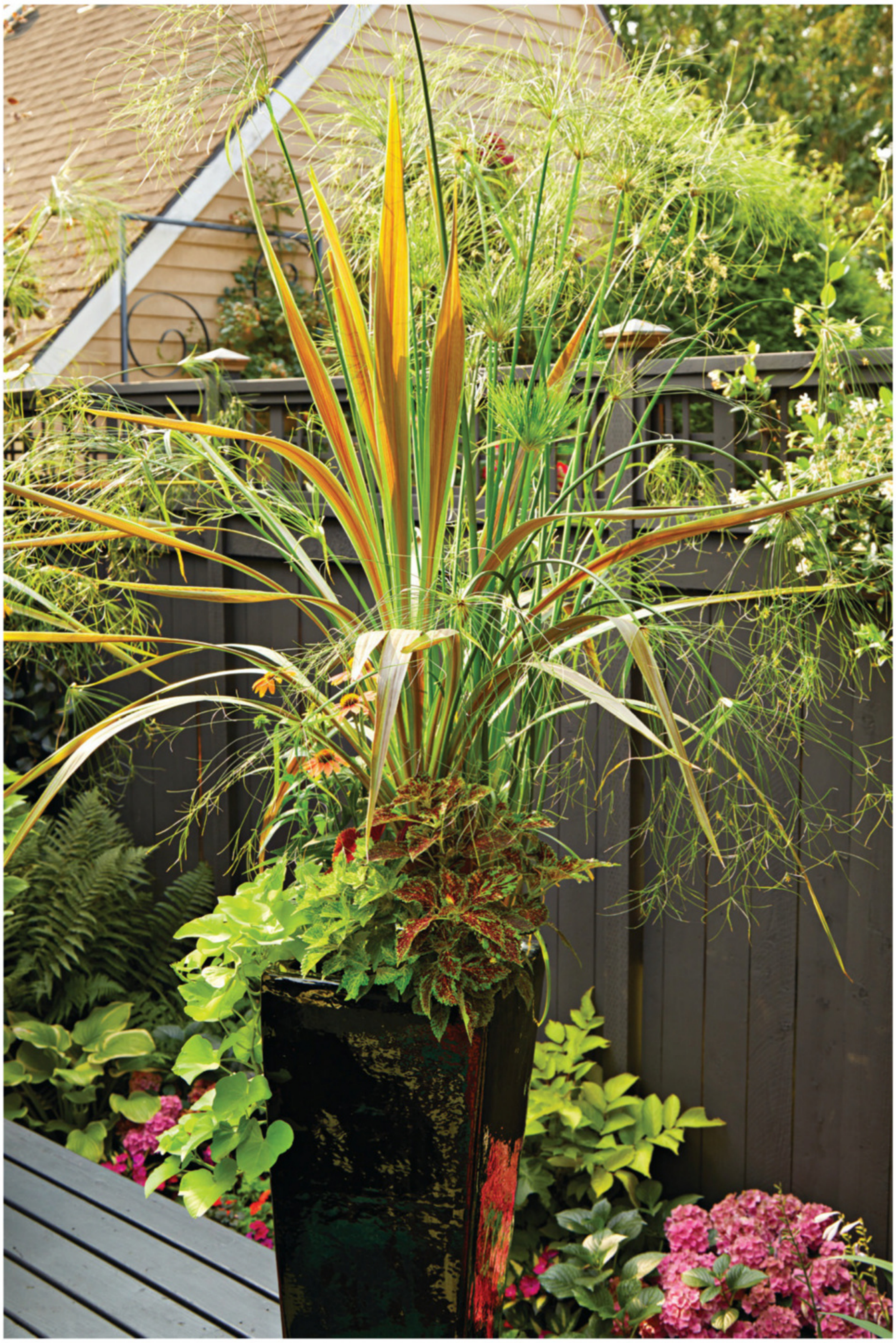






1 When the deck fills up with planters, Janet goes vertical. A half-circle metal planter hangs on the fence to display aloes and other succulents. Purple and lime green foliage and flowers, including Persian shield and impatiens, add zing below. A yellow-green gazing globe accents the color scheme. 2 Containers are key in Janet's garden styling because of the limited in-ground planting space. This stack of pedestal planters holds over a dozen succulents. 3 A Buddha meditates in a tiered garden bed of SunPatiens, coleus, elephant's ear, 'King Tut' papyrus, canna, and other showy plants. Janet elevated the statue on cement blocks so it stands out amid fast-growing annuals. 4 Square orange pots, which echo a tangerine accent in the deck's rug, display sun-loving succulents that look good all season long. *Yucca filamentosa* takes the starring role in the tallest pot, with upright plants like blue chalksticks *(Senecio serpens)* and lemon bean bush *(S. barbertonicus)* in the smaller pots. Various sedums, kalanchoe, echeveria, *Crassula*, and *Portulacaria* make a fleshy green tapestry.

> “I love using different textures and grouping plants by color to add drama.”
>
> —HOMEOWNER JANET KAYSER-JOHNSON



TOP Janet and Eric make the most of their small garden, which measures just 22×35 feet. Despite close neighboring houses, the garden feels private thanks to lush plantings with big, bold leaves. **ABOVE** Fireworks seem to burst from a tall black pot, where the lime green, sparkler-like foliage of ‘King Tut’ papyrus dances above chocolate-and-lime leaves of *Cordyline* ‘Electric Star’. Orange *Echinacea* ‘Cheyenne Spirit’ and burgundy-and-lime coleus harmonize, while ‘Desana Lime’ sweet potato vine cascades over the edge.

POWER PLANTERS

Create drama in your own backyard by simplifying colors and playing with height and texture. Janet Kayser-Johnson shares her tips for arranging eye-catching planters.

GO MONOCHROMATIC

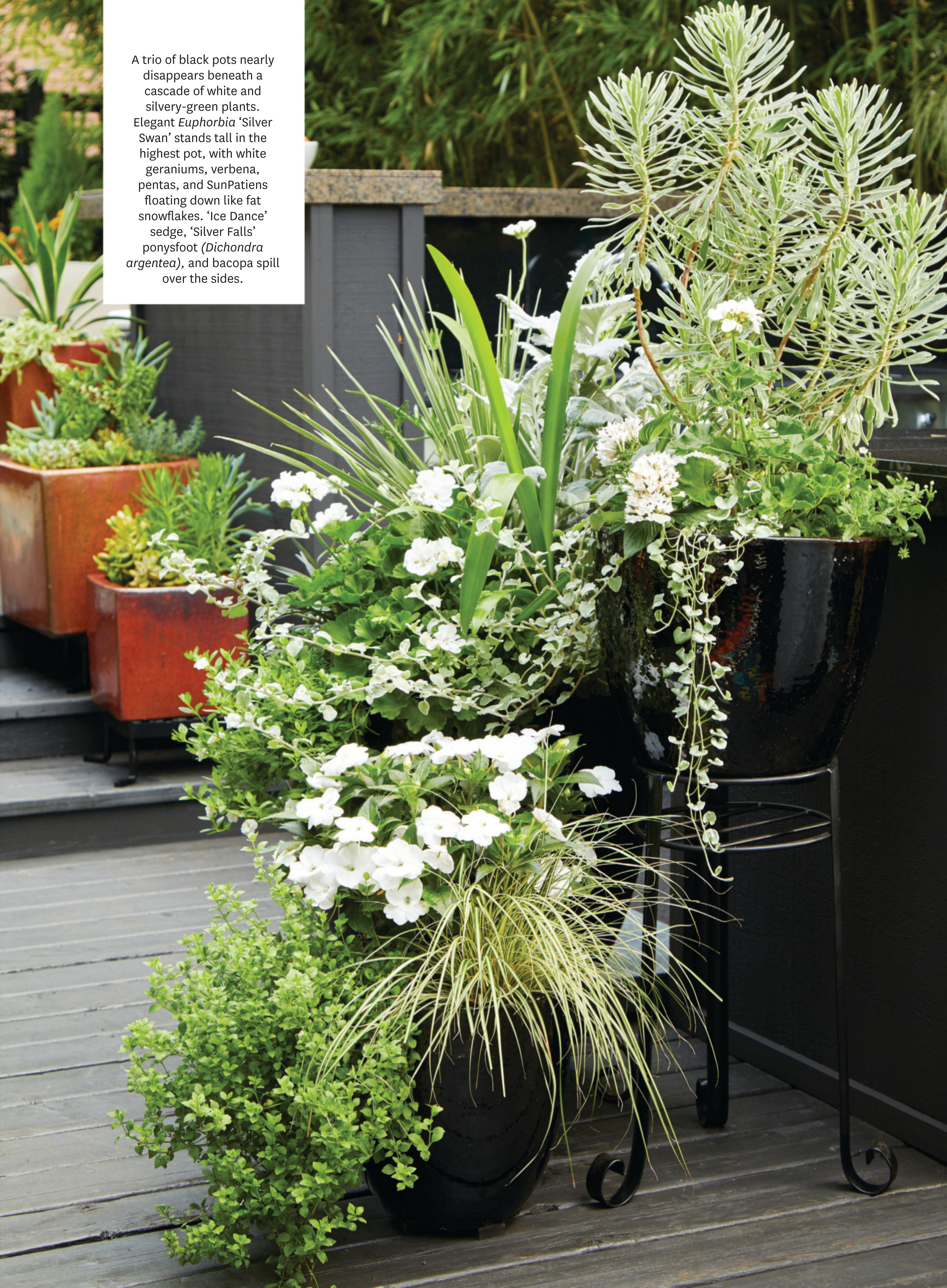
Avoid the box-of-crayons effect. Opt for one or two harmonious colors per pot or pot grouping to focus on varying plant textures and shapes. For extra pizzazz, echo the color of a nearby rug or cushion in blooms or leaves of your plant palette.

GROUP POTS OF VARYING HEIGHTS

A trio of similar pots pleases the eye. Choose a tall, medium, and small container of the same color and finish, or pick three identical pots and elevate two of them on plant stands, concrete blocks, or steps. Janet favors black glazed containers that recede into the background, letting plants take the starring role.

PRIMP AND PRUNE

Deadhead flowers, remove damaged or yellowing leaves, and trim leggy stems regularly to help you keep an eye out for pests and disease. As summer annuals fade, Janet pulls them out and replaces them with ornamental grasses or small evergreen perennials to extend a container’s beauty into fall.



A trio of black pots nearly disappears beneath a cascade of white and silvery-green plants. Elegant *Euphorbia* 'Silver Swan' stands tall in the highest pot, with white geraniums, verbena, pentas, and SunPatiens floating down like fat snowflakes. 'Ice Dance' sedge, 'Silver Falls' ponysfoot *(Dichondra argentea),* and bacopa spill over the sides.

BECOME MORE WATER-WISE

Time to harvest a new crop: rainwater! You'll abate runoff, cut your water bill, and promote conservation by incorporating a rain barrel into your garden space.

RAIN BARREL STANDARDS

SIZE Standard barrels come in 50-, 65-, and 80-gallon sizes.

HARDWARE We like a sturdy solid-brass spigot for filling up watering cans, *right*. Placement should be low on the barrel but allow for easy can clearance.

DRAINAGE Check for a hose-accessible drain placed near the bottom of the barrel to easily access every drop of water (remember to empty it before first freeze).

LID You'll want a tight-fitting screen lid to keep out mosquitos and debris—and curious pets and kids.

OVERFLOW Look for an overflow spout or hose near the top of your barrel to redirect excess water away from your foundation. It can be added later as a basic hose-connected diverter kit, but it's nice to start with one. The smaller your barrel, the more important an overflow diverter is.

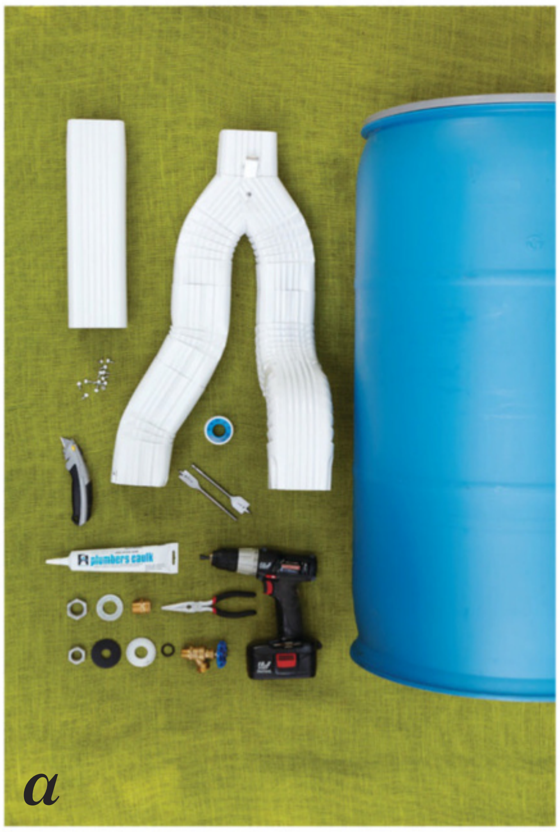
PRESSURE Gravity-fed systems work when the barrel spigot is higher than the hose in your hand. You can elevate your barrel, but use a sturdy, well-built platform. (A full rain barrel can weigh up to 500 pounds.) Or get a booster pump that connects hose to barrel and provides pressurized water at the flip of a switch.

MOST COMMON TYPES OF BARRELS

POLYMER Sturdy plastic designed in various styles and colors.
PROS: Durable, UV-resistant, light.
CONS: Can be costly.

WOOD Pairs modern features with natural materials.
PROS: Attractive and less likely to blow over from wind.
CONS: Heavy, can be expensive, and requires upkeep.

UPCYCLED Repurposed garbage cans or large barrels that once held food or oil.
PROS: Lightweight and inexpensive.
CONS: Can wear out quickly; must fashion a lid for safety.



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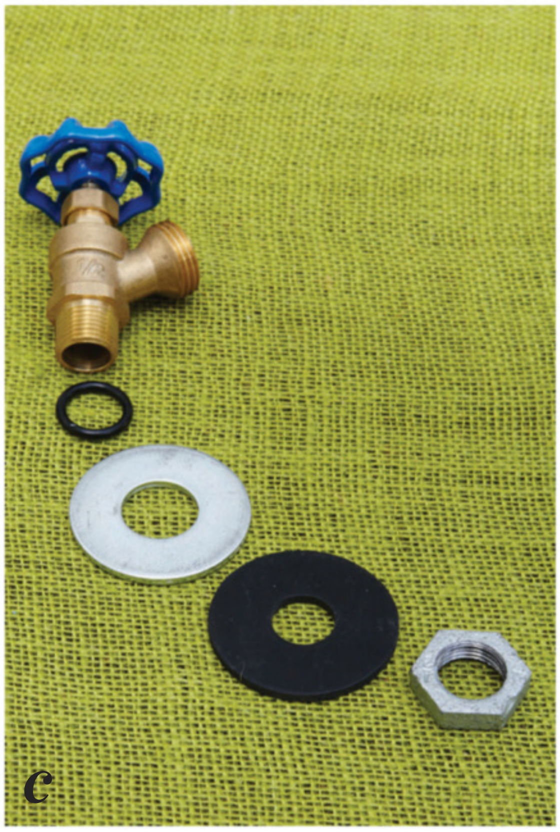

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HOW TO MAKE A RAIN BARREL

Cheap, simple, and smart: A rain barrel takes just a few tools and supplies to construct, and the saved water can be used for containers and flowerbeds.

MATERIALS

- Drill and drill bits
- Large plastic barrel or container with lid
- Spigot
- 1 rubber O-ring
- 1 metal washer
- Tube of waterproof sealant or roll of plumbers tape
- 1 rubber washer
- 1 nut
- Landscaping fabric

INSTRUCTIONS

1. **DRILL A HOLE** Gather materials (a), then drill a hole near the bottom of the barrel to insert the spigot (b). Use a drill bit that's the same size or slightly smaller than the spigot. The hole should be placed high enough for your watering can to fit beneath.

2. **PREP THE SPIGOT** Slide a rubber O-ring onto the threaded end of the spigot, then place a metal washer over the threads to help hold the O-ring in place and prevent leaks (c).

3. **WATERPROOF IT** Apply a bead of waterproof sealant to the backside of the metal washer (or wrap the threads in plumbers tape), then insert the spigot into the hole (d). Wait for the sealant to dry, then slide a rubber washer onto the threads of the spigot inside the barrel. Secure the spigot in place inside the barrel by tightening the nut onto the threaded end.

4. **REWORK THE LID** Cut a hole in the lid where the water will run into the barrel from a downspout. Be sure the hole is large enough to accommodate the water flow from the downspout.

5. **MAKE A RUN-OVER SPOUT** Drill one or two holes near the top of the rain barrel to allow water to overflow.

6. **SET THE LID IN PLACE** Use scissors to cut a piece of landscaping fabric to fit over the top of the barrel, then place the lid on top to secure the fabric. This creates a barrier to keep out mosquitoes, bugs, and other pests.

7. **PLACE THE BARREL** Set the barrel directly under the downspout (e). Consider placing it on a platform if you connect the barrel to a hose. Having the barrel elevated also makes it easier to fill a watering can.

KNOW THE RULES

Most states encourage rain collection, though some areas have restrictions on the amount and method. Check with your local government before installing more than one 50-gallon barrel.

PHOTOGRAPHER: KINDRA CLINEFF

BRING THE HEAT
The darker or more reflective the material, the warmer your raised-bed soil will get. See page 56 *for how to build a metal-sided bed.*

GET READY TO GROW!

A raised garden bed provides a tidy spot for vegetables, flowers, or fruits to flourish. Once the structure is set up, fill it with potting soil and sow seeds or plant seedlings.

RAISED BED MUST-DOS

ADD MULCH
Without it, weeds will take over and your raised beds will lose water more quickly.

USE FERTILIZER OR COMPOST
Add both (including a couple inches of the latter) to your raised bed every year.

SWAP PLANTS EACH YEAR
Take squash, for example: Move them around to keep pests like squash bugs from finding a home—and wiping out your plants.

MATERIALS MATTER

Choose something that's rot-resistant like:

CEDAR OR REDWOOD

BRICKS
Retaining wall bricks work best.

CONCRETE

METAL

PREFAB KITS

CONTAINERS
Bigger ones, like troughs, can sink into the ground several inches. Make sure to drill drainage holes in the bottom first.

COMPOSITE MATERIALS

STONE

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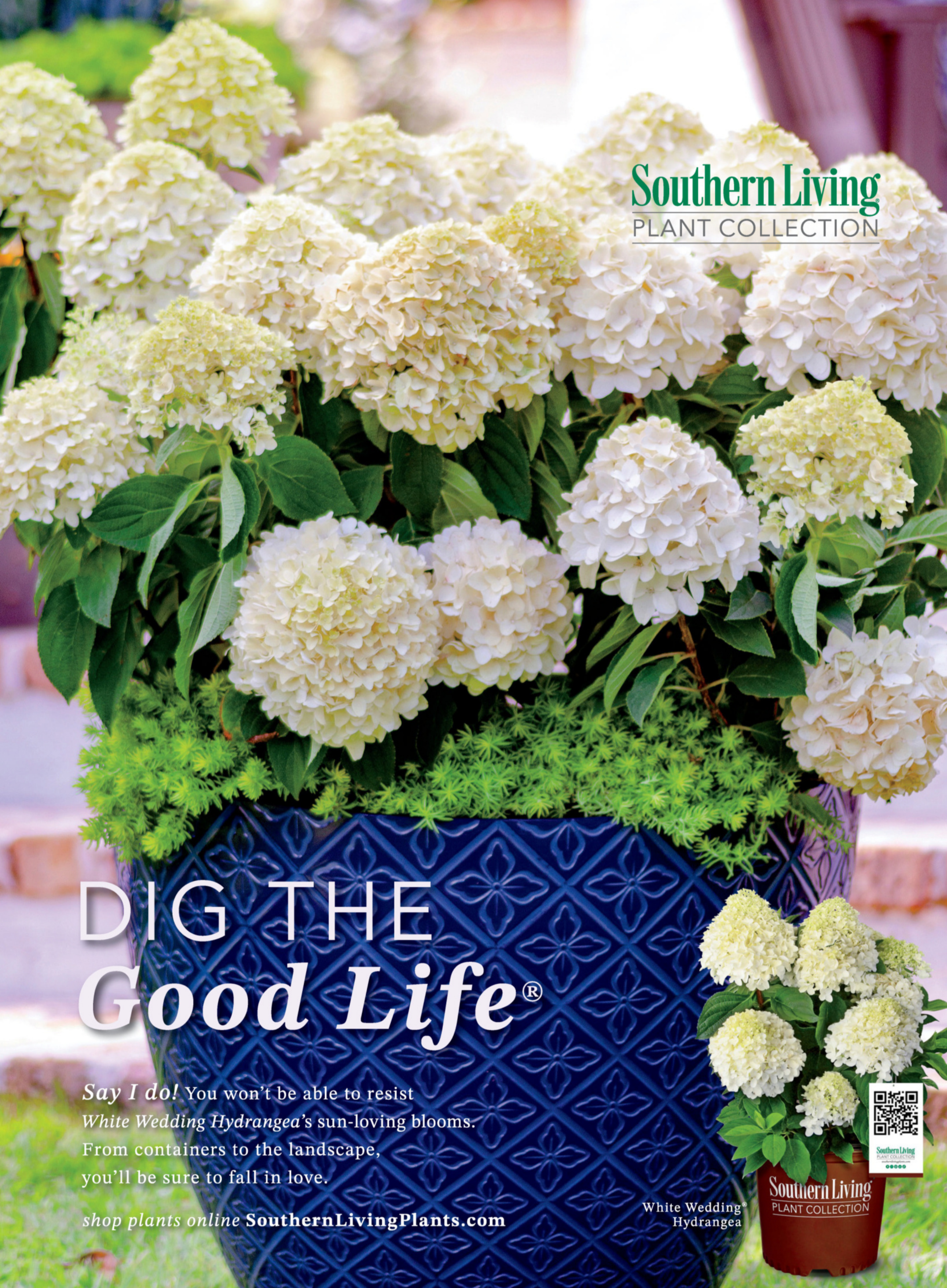

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